

**Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Study Report
and
Legislative Environmental Impact Statement
for the
Secesh River, South Fork Salmon River,
Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek**

**Payette and Boise National Forests
Idaho**

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SUMMARY

This Legislative Environmental Impact Statement Study Report (hereafter referred to as the Study Report) was prepared to address the suitability of the Secesh River, South Fork Salmon River (SFSR), Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek, on the Boise and Payette National Forests in South Central Idaho, for potential designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, 1968). Segments of these rivers (see Tables J-1 and J-2, and Figure J-1, below) are recognized as outstanding examples of free-flowing streams, and have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (USDA Forest Service 1988, 1990).

Once determined eligible, these river segments and their corridors are tentatively classified for suitability study as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational based on the degree of access and the amount of development along the river corridor. A Wild river classification is a river or river segment that is generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines that are essentially primitive. A Scenic river is one that may be accessible in places by roads, but the shorelines or watersheds are largely undeveloped. A Recreational river is readily accessible, and may have some development along the shoreline.

This Study Report provides information on physical and biological attributes; current land ownership and use; foreseeable land uses that may be enhanced or restricted by Wild and Scenic River designation; public interest, and other issues identified during the public involvement process. This Study Report was prepared concurrently with the Boise and Payette National Forest Plan revisions and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

Development of alternatives began with the study of the five rivers (Secesh River, SFSR, Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek) to determine suitability or non-suitability for Wild and Scenic River designation. Issues, concerns, and opinions were solicited from Forest Service specialists, other federal agencies, state and local governments, interest groups and individuals. The primary issues associated with Wild and Scenic River management were the potential effects on:

- Impoundments or other major water resource projects
- Private lands and uses within or adjacent to river corridors
- Mineral extraction opportunities and current mineral leases and claims
- Long-term scenic quality

Other issues were identified, but during comment analysis it was determined that these issues could be addressed outside the alternative development process (see Chapter IV – Issues and Alternatives). An Interdisciplinary (ID) Team of resource specialists was assembled to review issues, develop alternatives, and provide resource information for this Study Report. Three alternatives were developed for the rivers included in the study. Any of the three alternatives, or a combination of the alternatives, can be selected for the final recommendation for each river.

For example, the decision maker can select Alternative 1 for one river, and a combination of Alternatives 2 and 3 for another river. The following three alternatives were developed and analyzed in this Study Report.

Alternative 1 – (No Action Alternative)

None of the five rivers and their corridors would be recommended to Congress for Wild and Scenic River designation under this alternative, or managed under eligibility criteria with river protection standards. The rivers and their corridors would henceforth be managed under the revised Boise and Payette National Forest Plan management direction and prescription(s) for the area where the river is located. None of the rivers, or their corridors would be afforded Wild and Scenic River Act protection from potential water resource development. Management direction for the corridor areas of three rivers located within the Frank Church Wilderness of No Return (Segment 2 of Big Creek, Segment 2 of Monumental Creek and Segment 2 of SFSR) will be found in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 1986), which is currently being revised. Direction can be found in the existing FCRONR Plan until the revision is completed. The federal government has the option to purchase conservation easements and/or fee titles under this alternative to protect river values.

Alternative 2

This alternative recommends both Wild and Recreational classifications for all river segments considered for Wild and Scenic River suitability in this study report (Table J-1). The classification for a river segment depends on the existing condition of that river segment. The classification for eligible segments of river in the FCRONR is Wild, and the classification for eligible segments outside of the FCRONR is Recreational. This alternative recommends the purchase of conservation easements and fee title acquisitions on certain private lands.

Table J-1. Recommended Segments and their Classifications – Alternative 2

River	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Secesh	Recreational	Wild	Recreational
SFSR	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Monumental	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Big Creek	Recreational	Wild	N/A
French Creek	Wild	Wild	Wild

Alternative 3

This alternative recommends less restrictive classifications for some river segments (Table J-2). The Segment 2 classifications for the Secesh River and French Creek for this alternative (Recreational) are lower than they are for Alternative 2 (Wild). For Big Creek, Monumental Creek, and SFSR, the recommended classifications remain the same as Alternative 2, as these segments are within or primarily within the FCRONR Wilderness, and are afforded wilderness protection. No purchases of easements or acquired fee titles are proposed on private lands under this alternative.

Table J-2. Recommended Segments and their Classifications - Alternative 3

River	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Secesh	Recreational	Recreational	Recreational
SFSR	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Monumental	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Big Creek	Recreational	Wild	N/A
French Creek	Recreational	Recreational	Recreational

SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

Chapter V of this Study Report discloses known and foreseen effects, trade-offs, and uses foregone by recommending any or all of the study rivers as suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. The revised Boise and Payette National Forest Plans have certain river values or riparian area protective measures in place for the river corridors (see Chapter III, Management Direction). The primary results of recommending designation for the study rivers would be:

- Protection from future impoundment until Congress decides on designation;
- Protection of river values until Congress decided on designation; and
- Recognition of the rivers that are suitable as potential valuable additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Recommendation or non-recommendation of the five rivers analyzed in this Study Report will be accompanied by trade-offs and uses forgone for some resources. Suitable segments will be managed by the Forest as if they were designated Wild and Scenic Rivers until such time as Congress decides to officially designate them or not. If Congress designates the segments, the Forest will continue to manage them as Wild and Scenic Rivers under their designated classifications. If Congress does not designate the segments, the Forest will manage them according to the Forest Plan management direction and prescription(s) for the areas in which they are found.

River segments classified as Recreational have a minimal effect on current and future mineral, timber, and road construction opportunities because these activities (with potential mitigation measures in place to protect ORVs from deteriorating) can still occur. A Wild classification, however, is more restrictive with regard to certain resource uses and activities. River corridors (on each side of the river) classified as Wild are withdrawn from future mineral exploration and development. Timber harvest and road construction is prohibited within the corridor. No large campgrounds can be located within the river corridor, and new structures are not allowed except in rare instances to achieve management objectives such as wildlife protection and enhancement programs. New transmission lines, gas, and water lines are strongly discouraged, and motorized travel is restricted.

Alternative 2 recommends the most river segments under a Wild classification. Segments with this classification that are already within Wilderness or Recommended Wilderness (Segment 2-Big Creek, Segment 2-Monumental Creek, most of Segment 2 SFSR and Segment 2 Secesh

River-Recommended Wilderness) do not significantly affect future management because of the already existing Wilderness prohibitions and proposed Wilderness management practices. The Alternative 2 recommended Wild segments of French Creek (Segments 1, 2, and 3) would affect, to a certain degree, future commodity development opportunities within those river corridors.

The tables in Chapter IV provide a summary comparison of the effects of each alternative, and Chapter V details the environmental, social, and economic effects of National Wild and Scenic River suitability recommendation. This Study Report provides the necessary information for the decision maker for the Payette and Boise National Forest Plans to proceed with recommending any or all of the five rivers being studied. The decision maker's recommendation will be a preliminary administrative recommendation for Wild and Scenic designation. It will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on designation of rivers as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED

INTRODUCTION

This Study Report was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, including their implementing regulations. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Study process (Interagency Wild & Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1997), the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Assessment*, and the Forest Plan revision process were used to guide the Study Report analysis. The purpose of the Study Report is to address the suitability of the Secesh River, South Fork Salmon River (SFSR), Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek on the Boise and Payette National Forests for potential designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These river segments are recognized as free-flowing rivers with outstanding features, and have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This Study Report provides information on physical and biological attributes; river attributes; current land ownership and use; foreseeable land uses that may be enhanced or restricted by Wild and Scenic River designation; public interest, and other issues raised during the public involvement process.

Designation of a Wild and Scenic River is considered a significant federal action. The Forest Service, acting on behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture, will consider whether to recommend any or all of these rivers to Congress for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Any Wild and Scenic River recommendation in a Forest Plan is a preliminary administrative recommendation that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. Congress has the authority to make final decisions on the designation of rivers as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Therefore, Wild and Scenic River recommendations cannot be appealed under the Forest Service's administrative appeal procedures.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 grew out of a concern by many Americans that the country's natural, free-flowing rivers were being lost to dams and other development. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System is the primary federal program to protect the natural qualities of rivers that are completely or mostly bordered by federal lands, such as National Forest. The Act declares that selected rivers with Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORVs) shall be preserved in a free-flowing condition, and that these rivers and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Rivers that are authorized for inclusion by an Act of Congress become part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Designation of a river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act affords the river certain legal protection from adverse development and provides a mechanism for management of river

resources. The principle effect of the Act is to preclude or severely limit the construction of dams and other significant water resources projects that might affect river values. A study river is a river segment and the adjacent corridor within a quarter mile of its banks that is identified for study as a potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (36CFR 297.3).

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides for three classifications: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational. A Wild river is one that is remote and in a relatively undisturbed physical setting. A Scenic river may be accessible by road and may have a fair amount of development in its corridor, but intrusions are minor and largely unnoticeable by someone within the river corridor. A Recreational river has considerable development in its corridor and easy river access, but it is often the kind of development that enhances river recreation (such as campgrounds and boat launches). A more complete discussion of these classifications can be found in Definitions of Wild, Scenic, and Recreational rivers in Chapter III of this Study Report.

PURPOSE AND NEED, AND THE PROPOSED ACTION

Purpose and Need – The purpose of this Study Report is to determine the suitability of the Secesh River, SFSR, Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System. These rivers, along with four other rivers on the Payette National Forest, were identified as being eligible for potential recommendation through the Forest Plan revision process. Due to limited time and a lack of financial resources, only the five rivers mentioned above are being considered in this Suitability Study.

The need for the analysis at this time is the result of a 1989 settlement between American Rivers, Inc., and the Payette National Forest. The Forest agreed to conduct suitability studies for the five rivers determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System during Forest Plan revision. Prior to the suitability study being completed, the Forest committed to providing interim protection and management of the rivers and their corridors under a Wild classification (USDA Forest Service 1997). This suitability study addresses the river's potential classifications and suitability simultaneously.

The Boise National Forest used the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, the Pacific Northwest River Study, the Statewide Plan, and public comments as sources for determining possible eligible rivers for the 1990 Forest Plan. Of rivers evaluated for their eligibility, 32 river segments from three drainages were found to be free flowing and have at least one ORV (USDA Forest Service 1990). Of those 32 river segments, one, the Boise portion of the SFRS, is being considered in this Study Report.

New river eligibility studies were conducted on the Boise and Payette National Forests as part of the Forest Plan revision process from 1998 to 2002. Results of those studies can be found in Appendix D of the revised Boise and Payette Forest Plans.

The Proposed Action – The Proposed Action for this Study Report is to determine the suitability of Secesh, SFSR, Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek for recommendation into the National Wild and Scenic River System. The five rivers being

considered for recommendation to Congress for Wild and Scenic River designation are included below along with an explanation of their suitability. Refer to Findings of Eligibility and Classification in Chapter III of this Study Report for further discussion of the study river attributes.

- **Secesh River** – Has an important anadromous fishery that is a tributary to the SFSR. It is being considered for designation for its anadromous fish habitat.
- **South Fork Salmon River (SFSR)** – Has anadromous fish habitat, recreational values, scenery, cultural resources, botanical and geological values.
- **Monumental Creek** – Has anadromous fish habitat, scenery, cultural resources, and geological values.
- **Big Creek** – Has anadromous fish habitat and cultural resources.
- **French Creek** – French Creek and Jackson Creek have anadromous fish habitat and scenic values; Little French Creek has scenic values.

SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND DECISION TO BE MADE

The scope of the proposed action addressed in the Study Report is limited to the proposed recommendations of the five study rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System, under the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. These proposals are similar actions and therefore are considered together.

The Responsible Official for this action is the Regional Forester of the Intermountain Region, and his decision will be published in the Records of Decision for the revised Boise and Payette Forest Plans.

ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES

The following issues were identified through the public notification and scoping process. These issues served as the basis for developing the alternatives and analyzing the potential effects of those alternatives.

- **Issue 1:** Potential effects of precluding impoundments or other major water resource projects.
- **Issue 2:** Potential effects on included private land and uses.
- **Issue 3:** Potential effects on mineral extraction opportunities and current mineral leases and claims.

- **Issue 4:** Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities.

An Interdisciplinary (ID) Team composed of resource specialists in recreation, visuals, minerals, timber, hydrology, fire, lands, fisheries, geology, wildlife, botany, and cultural resources reviewed the issues and developed three alternatives described below to address these issues.

Alternative 1 – (No Action Alternative)

Although “no action” for federal proposals often means continue current management, such is not the case for this Study Report. Currently the five study rivers are considered “eligible” for inclusion into the Wild and Scenic River system, which means they are being managed as if they had Wild and Scenic status. However, under the No Action alternative the five rivers would not be recommended to Congress for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers. In other words, “no action” for this study means no recommendation. The rivers would no longer be considered eligible, and would be subject to the management direction in the revised Payette and Boise National Forest Plans (for areas outside of wilderness) and the FCRONR Programmatic and Operational Management Plan, which is currently being revised (for areas inside wilderness). The rivers and their corridors would be protected under other applicable laws and regulations, but would no longer have Wild and Scenic River Act protection as eligible rivers. The Federal government has the option to purchase conservation easements and/or fee titles under this alternative.

Alternative 2

This alternative recommends Wild and Scenic River designation for all five rivers at the most restrictive potential classification. See Table J-3 for the recommended classifications for each river segment. Alternative 2 recommends the purchase of conservation easements and fee title acquisitions on certain private lands to protect river values.

Table J-3. Recommended Segments and their Classifications - Alternative 2

River	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Secesh	Recreational	Wild	Recreational
SFSR	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Monumental	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Big Creek	Recreational	Wild	N/A
French Creek	Wild	Wild	Wild

Alternative 3

This alternative recommends Wild and Scenic River designation for all five rivers, but recommends less restrictive potential classifications for some river segments (Table J-4). The Segment 2 classifications for the Secesh River and French Creek are less restrictive for this alternative (Recreational) than they are for Alternative 2 (Wild). For Big Creek, Monumental Creek, and SFSR, the recommended classifications remain the same as Alternative 2 as these segments are within or primarily within the FCRONR Wilderness, and are afforded wilderness

protection. No purchases of easements or fee title acquisitions are proposed on private lands under this alternative.

Table J-4. Recommended Segments and their Classifications - Alternative 3

River	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Secesh	Recreational	Recreational	Recreational
SFSR	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Monumental	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Big Creek	Recreational	Wild	N/A
French Creek	Recreational	Recreational	Recreational

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE RIVER AREAS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overall description of the rivers and their respective quarter mile corridors (on each side of the river) being considered for Wild and Scenic River recommendation in this Study Report. The quarter mile river corridor boundary is established for study purposes only. If a river is designated, a survey will be conducted to establish actual corridor boundaries, which are based on natural or man-made features (canyons, rims, roads, and ridge tops) and legally identifiable property lines. These boundaries would replace the quarter mile study boundary and could be wider than a quarter mile in some areas, and less than a quarter mile in other areas. Corridor boundaries are established to protect the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for which the river is being designated. The corridor boundaries may not exceed 320 acres per river mile over the designated portion of the river. Included are discussions of the setting and natural features, land ownership patterns, and current uses along each river.

REGIONAL SETTING

There are currently four designated Wild and Scenic Rivers within or adjacent to the Boise and Payette National Forests: the Snake River, administered by the Wallawa-Whitman National Forest; the Salmon River administered by the Salmon-Challis National Forest and the Nez Perce National Forest; the Rapid River, administered by the Wallawa-Whitman; and the Middle Fork Salmon River, administered by the Salmon-Challis National Forest (Figure J-1).

The State of Idaho Department of Water Resources recommends rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System through their Comprehensive Management Plans. Their recommendations are based on completed subbasin reviews. They recently completed a review of the Payette River Basin and recommended the North Fork Payette River (9.6 miles) and the South Fork Payette River (7.9 miles) under a Recreational classification.

There is no Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land within any of the five river segments analyzed in this study, but the BLM does manage river segments just outside the river corridor boundaries. The BLM manages 1.8 miles of river and corridor along the Lake Creek segment of the Secesh River. This section of land is managed under Wild classification guidelines to maintain the river's eligibility until a suitability report has been completed for that portion of the river. The BLM also manages 1.4 miles of lower French Creek and its corridor under a Recreational classification.

This Study Report used different Regions of Comparison when evaluating the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for the five rivers being analyzed (USDA Forest Service 2001). The Regions of Comparison used the Columbia River Basin, with some geographical variations among resources. Regions of Comparison maps can be found in the map packet at the end of

this Study Report, and are also defined and mapped in the Upper Columbia River Basin Draft EIS/Appendix B. The same Region of Comparison was used for scenic, recreation, wildlife, and fisheries ORVs (Regions of Comparison Map Packet, Map 1). Map 2 displays the Region of Comparison to analyze geologic and botanical ORVs. Maps 3a through 5b display the Regions of Comparison for cultural ORVs.

The five rivers being analyzed in this study are located in the following subbasins:

- Secesh River and South Fork Salmon River – South Fork Salmon River subbasin
- Big Creek and Monumental Creek – Lower Middle Fork Salmon River subbasin
- French Creek – Lower Salmon River subbasin

All five rivers drain into the Salmon River within the Columbia River Basin. Figure J-1 displays the five rivers in this Study Report and the four rivers in the area that are already designated Wild and Scenic.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SECESH RIVER AREA

Location, Land Ownership, Roads

Except for four isolated parcels of private land, the Secesh River corridor below Marshall Lake is managed by the Payette National Forest. For the purposes of this analysis, the river corridor begins at the Payette National Forest boundary at Lake Creek, just below the outlet to Marshall Lake (T24N, R5E, Section 36) and continues southeasterly down Lake Creek and the Secesh River (T20N, R6E, Section 34) (Figure J-2). This 45-mile river corridor below Marshall Lake is being considered for Wild and Scenic River suitability. The river corridor lies in Idaho and Valley Counties.

Of the 45 Secesh River miles eligible for designation, 36 miles (80 percent) are on NFS lands, and 9 miles (20 percent) are on private lands. A description of the three recommended Secesh River segments follows.

Segment 1 – Segment 1 (25 miles/6,984 acres) begins where Lake Creek crosses into the Payette National Forest boundary just below the outlet of Marshall Lake (Figure J-2). It continues along Lake Creek to where it joins with Summit Creek to form the Secesh River. Segment 1 continues along the Secesh River to Chinook Campground. The campground is within Segment 1, as are three of the four private land parcels (Burgdorf, Secesh Meadows, and a parcel near the confluence of Lake and Corduroy Creeks). Forest Highway 21, and Forest Roads 246 and 378 parallel the Secesh River throughout Segment 1, providing easy access to the entire length of the segment, except along private lands. Private lands comprise about 19 percent (1,296 acres) of this segment; the remainder is National Forest System (NFS) lands. Forest Highway 21 is visible from the river corridor for much of its length. Segment 1 flows through or adjacent to the edges of the French Creek, Crystal Mountain, Secesh, and Chimney Rock Inventoried Roadless Areas.

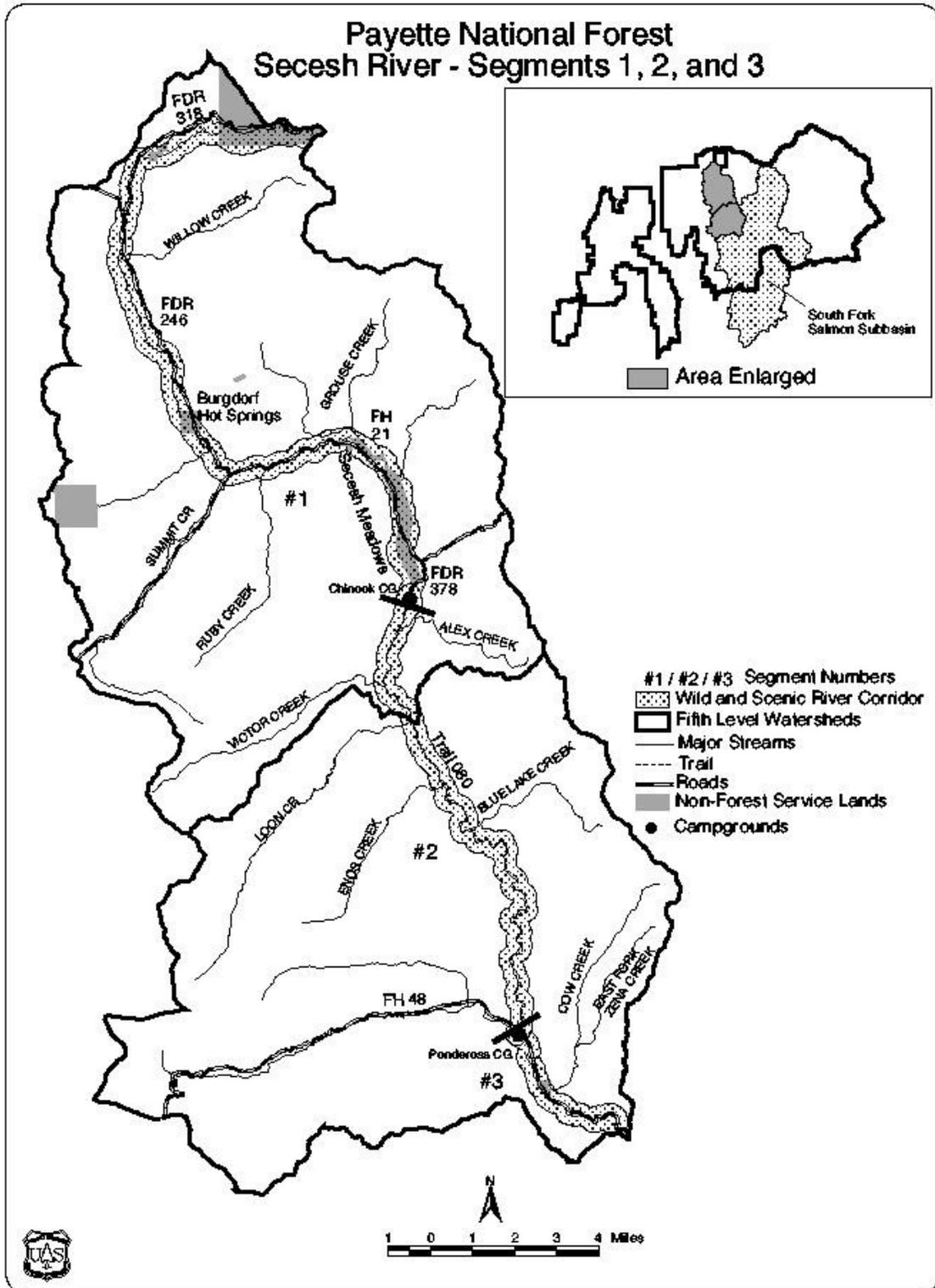
Segment 2 – Segment 2 (15 miles/4,498 acres) runs between Chinook and Ponderosa Campgrounds, but does not include them (Figure J-2). The entire segment is on NFS lands, and a majority is within the Secesh Inventoried Roadless Area. The Payette National Forest has recommended this portion of the roadless area for wilderness designation. Forest Trail 080, a non-motorized trail, follows the river along this entire segment.

Segment 3 – Segment 3 (5 miles/1,324 acres) runs from the Ponderosa Campground to the confluence with the South Fork Salmon River (SFSR) (Figure J-2). Most of the acreage (1,277) in this segment is NFS land; a small portion is private (47 acres). Forest Highway 48 parallels this segment, providing easy access to the river; this road is visible from the river corridor for all of its length.

Setting and Natural Features

Lake Creek and the upper reaches of the Secesh River flow through scenic meadows and timber landscapes, some of which have been logged in the past. The middle and lower reaches of the

Figure J-2. Secesh River



Secesh River are in a highly scenic and deeply dissected canyon within the Idaho batholith. Granitic rocks of the Idaho batholith are predominant and typical of the Secesh River drainage.

The upper reaches of Lake Creek and the Secesh River are surrounded by lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir forest. These tree species give way to stands of larch, grand fir, Douglas-fir, and ponderosa pine as the stream reaches lower elevations. The more common understory species include willow, sedge, ninebark, tall huckleberry, beargrass, fescue, and pinegrass.

Fire

The Secesh River drainage has a mix of fire regimes. Near the head of the drainage, lodgepole pine and mixed fir dominate the landscape and fire return intervals are approximately 200 years. The fire intensity (and tree mortality) in the lodgepole pine and mixed fir stands is high due to the fire return intervals and the accumulation of fuels in these areas. In the lower reaches, as the elevation decreases, ponderosa pine stands dominate the landscape, resulting in fire return intervals as low as 15 years. Fire intensity in these areas is lower due to the frequency of fire events. In general, there is an abundance of overstocked, shade-tolerant species within this drainage, which increases the possibility of future large fires. Since 1985 roughly 30 percent of this drainage has been burned by wildfires. Fires are actively suppressed in this drainage.

Recreation and Facilities

Outside of private lands, the river corridor provides opportunities for hiking, camping, 2-wheel motorized use, viewing scenery, boating, fishing, and hunting. The Secesh Meadows private land and subdivision is within Segment 1. This subdivision receives a high level of fishing use by private landowners. Segments 1 and 2 are popular for big-game hunting.

The Segment 1 river corridor includes the Forest Service Burgdorf Guard Station administrative site, and Burgdorf Hot Springs, a private holding. The Guard Station is located on Lake Creek. Burgdorf Hot Springs is listed on the National Register of Historical Places, and was one of the first properties in Idaho to be listed. Currently there is insufficient data to determine whether there are other historical or cultural sites within the corridor that qualify for listing on the National Register of Historical Places.

There are four developed campgrounds along the Secesh River and Lake Creek—Burgdorf Guard Station Campground, Burgdorf Campground, and Chinook Campground are located in Segment 1, and Ponderosa Campground is located in Segment 3. Chinook Campground includes a trailhead (Forest Trail 080) for 2-wheel motorized use, which is part of a popular hiking and mountain biking route to Loon Lake. This trail receives much lighter use between Loon Creek Bridge and Forest Highway 48.

Fisheries and Wildlife

Lake Creek and the Secesh River provide spawning and rearing habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead, both listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Spawning runs of steelhead may be observed in April, and chinook salmon runs are from July to September.

Threatened bull trout inhabit the river and its tributaries. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game plans to implement recovery of native westslope cutthroat trout in the Secesh River.

The Nez Perce Tribe maintains two fish weirs in Segment 1 for adult chinook salmon. One is located at the Lake Creek/Summit Creek confluence, and the other is adjacent to Chinook Campground. There are also two screw traps for counting out-migrating salmonids. Gabion baskets have been installed near Grouse Creek (Segment 1) to reduce erosion into the Secesh. Above the confluence with Corduroy Creek, several in-stream structures prevent head cutting upstream of a road bridge across Lake Creek.

The Secesh River drainage is also considered potential habitat for Canada lynx, listed as Threatened under the ESA. Moose are frequently seen in meadows and around potholes in the upper drainage. The lower portion of the drainage provides winter range for deer and elk. Elk use the Burgdorf Meadows area extensively during the spring calving period. Occasionally, bald eagles are sighted but no nesting sites are known in the river corridor.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTH FORK SALMON RIVER AREA

Location, Landownership, Roads

Although there are many parcels of private land along the river corridor, most of it is managed by the Payette and Boise National Forests. The SFSR is located in both Idaho and Valley Counties.

The SFSR headwaters (T13N, R6E, Section 12) flow north to the confluence with the main Salmon River (T24N, R8E, Section 32). An estimated 93 miles of the SFSR are recommended for Wild and Scenic River designation. Of these, less than 2 miles (2 percent) are privately owned, and 91 miles (98 percent) are on NFS lands. Of the 91 miles on NFS lands, about 10 miles (9 percent) are within the FCRONR Wilderness.

The two recommended segments of this river are described below.

Segment 1 – Segment 1 (78 miles/22,789 acres) extends from the SFSR headwaters on the Boise National Forest to the confluence with Smith Creek, approximately 2 miles from the FCRONR Wilderness boundary (see Figures J-3 and J-4). Segment 1 goes through the Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak, Needles, Caton Lake, Secesh, and Peace Rock Inventoried Roadless Areas (Needles and Secesh portions are Recommended Wilderness). The acreage within the half-mile river corridor, and on either side of the existing roads, is within the IRAs. A small portion of this segment (1 mile) is privately owned; the majority (77 miles) is on NFS lands.

Forest Roads 340 and 337 access and parallel the river for short distances along the Boise National Forest portion of Segment 1. The Warm Lake Highway (Highway 22) crosses the SFSR at Knox Bridge. In the vicinity of the bridge, Forest Road 474 heads north along the river, providing easy access. This road becomes Forest Road 674 as it enters the Payette National

Figure J-3. South Fork Salmon River Segment 1 – South Portion

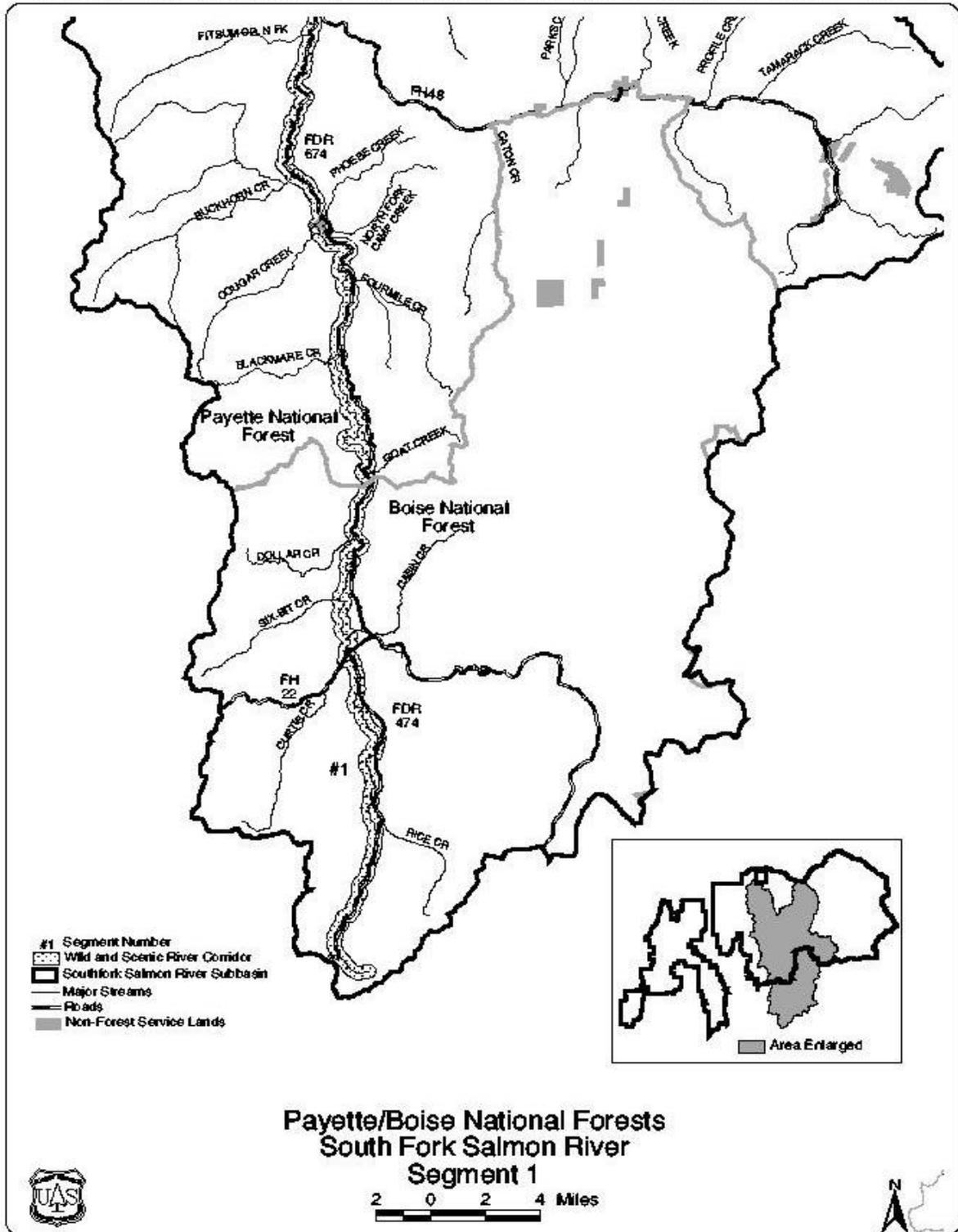
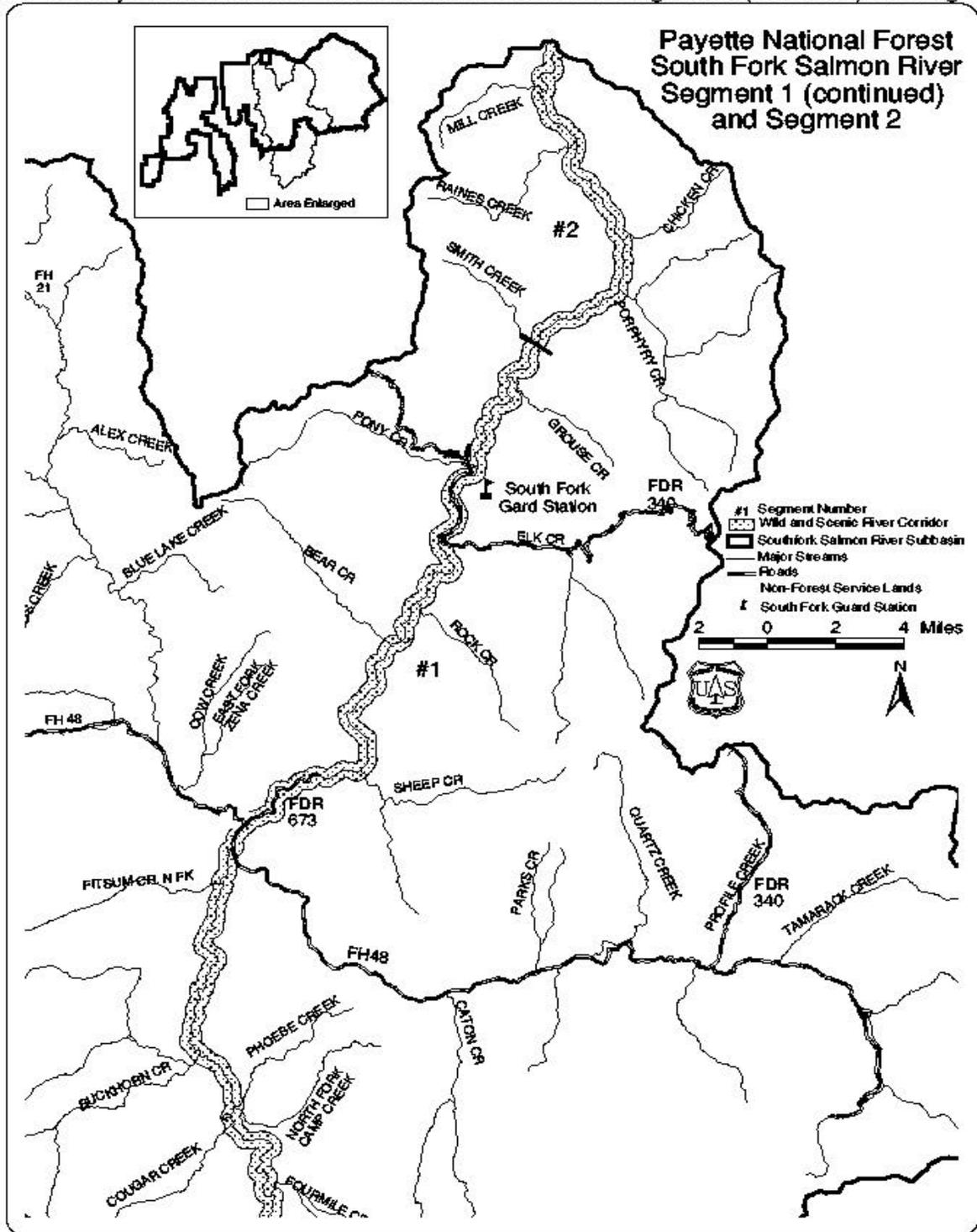


Figure J-4. South Fork Salmon River Segment 1 (North Portion) and Segment 2



Forest, and is visible from many points along the river. There are motorized and non-motorized trails in the river corridor. Motorized trail (076) parallels the river between Forest Roads 673 and 340. Non-motorized Trail 123 begins at the South Fork Guard Station and runs along the east side of the river to a point across from the Hettinger Ranch and non-motorized Trail 122.

Segment 2 – Segment 2 (15 miles/4,111 acres) is from the Smith Creek/SFSR confluence to the SFSR confluence with the main Salmon River corridor (Figure J-4). This segment is mostly free of development. There is a minimal amount of private land (212 acres), which includes several residences and ranches in the Mackay Bar area near the SFSR confluence with the Salmon River. Segment 2's terminus is the quarter mile boundary surrounding the Salmon River, which is a designated Wild and Scenic River. About 10 miles of Segment 2 are contained within the FCRONR Wilderness. Trail 122 parallels the river and begins at the end of Road 340 and continues to the confluence with the Salmon River.

Presently, vehicular access to the Badley Ranches, located near the confluence of the SFSR and Salmon River (Segment 2), requires maintenance of about 3 miles of the Lower South Fork Trail #122 to a 4-wheel drive road standard, as well as continued maintenance and use of bridges over the Main Salmon River and South Fork Salmon River.

Setting and Natural Features

The SFSR near its headwaters flows through meadows and timber landscapes. The river below Knox Bridge is in a deeply dissected canyon in the Idaho batholith. Granitic rocks of the Idaho batholith are extensive and typical of the stream-cut lands in the SFSR drainage. Most of the drainage is in the mature stage of the fluvial cycle when erosional processes are most active.

The upper reaches of the SFSR are surrounded by lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir forest. At lower elevations, these tree species give way to stands of western larch, grand fir, Douglas-fir, and ponderosa pine. Common understory species include willow, ninebark, tall huckleberry, beargrass, fescue, and pinegrass.

The river corridor has been used by American Indians for at least 10,000 years. The river has been ethnographically documented as a major fishery for the Nez Perce and Northern Shoshone Tribes. It is likely that prehistoric ancestors of other tribes also fished along the length of the drainage. There are three known prehistoric sites on the Boise National Forest portion of the corridor, and an estimated 40 known sites on the Payette National Forest.

Other more recent historical sites within the corridor include the Forest Service sites at Stolle Meadows (now the Stolle Meadows rental cabin), the Krassel Guard Station, and the South Fork Guard Station. All of these sites are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historical Places. In addition, there are several historic homesteads and ranches near the river. Knox Ranch and the Reed Ranch are two of the largest that are close to the river and eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Fire

The average fire return interval for the SFSR is 10 to 15 years for the lower ponderosa pine dominated elevations, and up to 200 years for the mixed fir stands in the higher elevations and at the head of the drainage. Fire occurrence is high in the drainage and old burn scars are scattered throughout the landscape. There have been several large fires recently—such as the Savage Creek (1985), Mann Creek (1987), Camp Creek (1988), Thunderbolt (1994), and Chicken (1994) Fires—that have influenced this drainage. Over the past ten years, an estimated 11,000 acres of prescribed burning have occurred in this drainage, which is scheduled for additional prescribed burning in the future. Wildfire suppression is active in this drainage.

Recreation and Facilities

In Segment 1, there is a Forest Service rental cabin located near Stolle Meadows and two Forest Service administrative sites at Krassel and the South Fork Guard Station (Figure J-3). There are many trailheads in the river corridor, including the popular Vulcan Hot Springs Trailhead in Segment 1. Seven developed campgrounds are located within Segment 1: South Fork, Penny Springs, Poverty Flat, Fourmile, Camp Creek, Shiefer, and Buckhorn. In Segments 1 and 2, there are several private cabins and out buildings on private land. Smith Creek landing strip is also within a private land inholding, and is located at the terminus of Segment 1.

In Segment 1, an Outfitter and Guide permit is currently issued to a permittee with a summer horse camp and fall hunting permit for the Stolle Meadows area.

The river and its corridor provide excellent white-water boating, hiking, camping, viewing scenery, and fishing opportunities. The Boise National Forest portion of Segment 1 provides outstanding recreational fishing opportunities for steelhead and chinook salmon, when Idaho Fish and Game is permitted to open the stretch of river for fishing. The upper reaches of the river corridor near Warm Lake offer more developed recreational experiences with relatively high visitor use and contacts. The corridor also has popular big-game hunting areas. Snowmobiling is becoming a popular winter recreation activity in Segment 1.

From Goat Creek to the confluence with the Secesh, the SFSR is closed to float-boat use from April 1 to May 31, and August 1 to September 30, to protect spawning salmon and steelhead listed under the ESA.

Fish and Wildlife

The river provides spawning and rearing habitat for Threatened chinook salmon and steelhead. Steelhead spawning runs can be observed in April, and chinook salmon runs are in August. Threatened bull trout also inhabit the river and its tributaries. The recovery of a native westslope cutthroat trout fishery in the SFSR is planned by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Habitat has been reduced by about half a river mile at the oxbow near the Reed Ranch due to human-caused alteration of the flow. When and if land ownership issues are resolved, the Northwest Power Planning Commission's Fish and Wildlife Program may attempt to restore this degraded habitat.

A permanent fish trap and holding facility operated by Idaho Department of Fish and Game is located in Segment 1 just downstream of the confluence with Trail Creek. A temporary screw trap is located on the SFSR near the bridge on the Warm Lake Highway (Segment 1), and another is near Hamilton Creek, downstream from the confluence with the Secesh River.

The SFSR drainage is considered potential habitat for Threatened Canada lynx. The lower portion of the drainage provides winter range for deer and elk and mountain goats. Occasionally, bald eagles may be sighted, but nesting sites are not known in the river corridor.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENTAL CREEK AREA

Location, Land Ownership, Roads

Monumental Creek is located in Valley County, has its headwaters in T18N, R10E, Section 17, and proceeds north to T21N, R11E, Section 17. The entire river, 26 miles, is being recommended for Wild and Scenic River suitability and is within the Lower Middle Fork Salmon Subbasin. All 26 miles are on NFS lands, except for the Von Staden property in Segment 2 (43 acres). Of the NFS lands in this river corridor, 20 miles (77 percent) are within the FCRONR Wilderness.

Segment 1 – Segment 1 (6 miles/1,930 acres) is from the headwaters to Coon Creek, located at Upper Monumental Creek Trailhead at the Wilderness boundary (Figure J-5). Forest Road 375 parallels Monumental Creek for almost the entire length of Segment 1. The road provides good access to this segment, and is visible from most points along Monumental Creek.

Segment 2 – Segment 2 (20 miles/6,976 acres) is from Coon Creek to the confluence with Big Creek, and is entirely within the FCRONR Wilderness (Figure J-5).

Setting and Natural Features

The headwaters of Monumental Creek are in a large glacial basin surrounded by highly scenic ridges and mountain peaks consisting of Challis volcanics. Challis volcanics and Paleozoic metamorphic rocks are extensive and typical of this drainage. Monumental Creek is named after “The Monument”, a pillar-like geological formation located in the Segment 2 river corridor. The entire length of the stream is within a glacial canyon.

The upper reaches of Monumental Creek are surrounded by lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir forest. These tree species give way to stands of grand fir, Douglas-fir, and ponderosa pine at lower elevations. The more common understory species include willow, ninebark, tall huckleberry, beargrass, fescue, and pennycress.

There are known cultural sites in this corridor, and the probability of other existing sites is high. Currently there is insufficient data to determine whether there are historical or cultural sites within the corridor that qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historical Places.

Fire

Mixed conifer stands are dominant throughout most of this drainage, with lodgepole pine and subalpine fir occurring in the upper slopes and head of the drainage. The Diamond Point Fire in 2000 burned the lower half of the drainage. Scattered scars of older burns exist in the drainage. Current conditions in the unburned portion of the drainage contribute to the possibility of future large wildfires. Portions of this area are covered by the FCRONR Fire Management Plan, and can support Wildland Fire Use fires. Fires are actively suppressed in this drainage.

Recreation and Facilities

There are historic ruins and evidence of the Thunder Mountain Gold Rush (1901-1909)-- including the Roosevelt Cemetery, the flooded town-site of Roosevelt, and Thunder City-- adjacent to Monumental Creek and Roosevelt Lake. These sites and "The Monument" are recreational destinations in the corridor and are all within Segment 2.

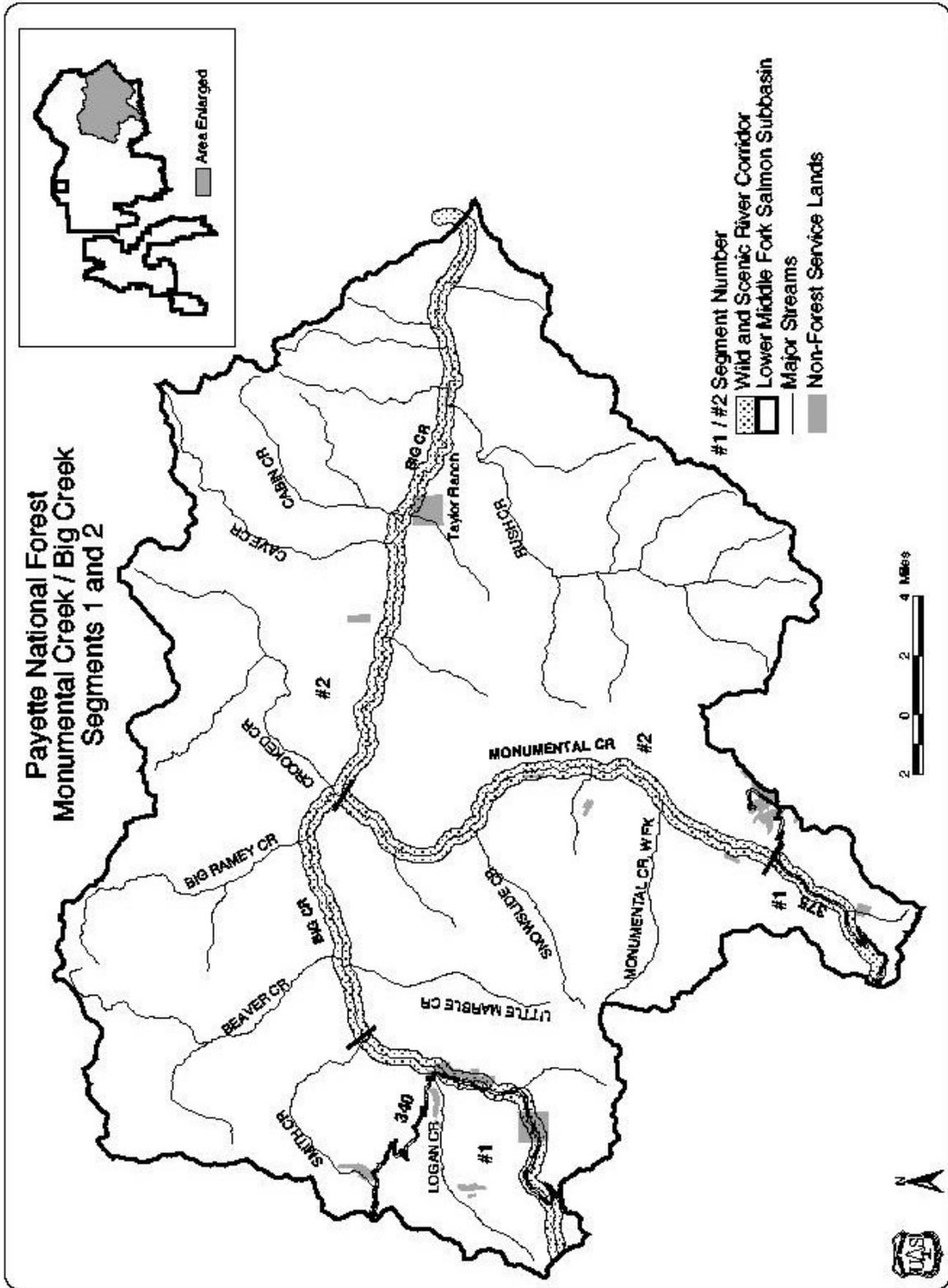
The river corridor provides opportunities for hiking, camping, viewing scenery, hunting, and fishing. The Monumental Creek area, both within and outside the wilderness, is a popular area for horseback riders. Non-motorized Forest Trail 005 follows the entire length of Segment 2.

Fish and Wildlife

The river provides spawning and rearing habitat for Threatened chinook salmon and steelhead. Steelhead spawning runs may be observed in April, and runs of chinook salmon are in August. Threatened bull trout inhabit the stream and its tributaries. Monumental Creek is also considered a native westslope cutthroat fishery. The entire river is closed to fishing for spring/summer chinook salmon. Fishing for trout is limited to catch and release.

The Monumental Creek drainage is considered potential habitat for Threatened Canada lynx, and also provides summer range for deer, elk, and mountain goats. Occasionally, bighorn sheep are seen along the river. Black bear are frequently observed and cougar are common. Bald eagles may be sighted, but no nesting sites are known in the river corridor.

Figure J-5. Big Creek and Monumental Creek



DESCRIPTION OF THE BIG CREEK AREA

Location, Land Ownership, and Roads

There are small parcels of private property within the corridor. The Payette National Forest manages all other portions of the river corridor. Big Creek lies within Valley County.

Big Creek begins at the headwaters (T20N, R9E, Section 18), and continues east to the confluence with the Middle Fork of the Salmon River (T20N, R14E, Section 10). The entire river, an estimated 49 miles, is within the Lower Middle Fork Salmon Subbasin and is being considered for Wild and Scenic River suitability. Of the 49 miles, 4 miles (8 percent) are privately or State owned; 45 miles (92 percent) are on NFS lands. Of the 45 miles on NFS lands, 35 miles (71 percent) are within the FCRONR Wilderness.

Segment 1 – Segment 1 (14 miles/4,097 acres) is from the headwaters to the FCRONR Wilderness boundary at Smith Creek (Figure J-5). Portions of the river corridor are contained in the Secesh, Smith Creek, Placer Creek, and Big Creek Fringe Roadless Areas. Forest Road 340 and the subdivided and developed community of Edwardsburg are within Segment 1. The road provides easy access to most of this segment, and is visible from most points along Big Creek.

Segment 2 – Segment 2 (35 miles/16,706) is located within the FCRONR Wilderness from the Wilderness boundary at Smith Creek and Big Creek confluence to Big Creek's confluence with the Middle Fork of the Salmon River (Figure J-5).

Setting and Natural Features

The headwaters of Big Creek are in a large glacial basin surrounded by scenic ridges and mountain peaks. Segment 1 flows through high mountain meadows and timbered landscapes of high scenic quality. Granitic rocks of the Idaho batholith and metamorphic rock are most extensive and typical of the strongly glaciated Big Creek drainage. Portions of the area are within quartzitic geologic groupings. Big Creek below Smith Creek is within a deeply dissected canyon. The corridor is considered an area of high potential for cultural values. There are several historical or cultural sites within the corridor that may qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Along lower Big Creek, there are large and well-preserved American Indian pictograph sites, along with several locations where prehistoric Indians had traditional winter house-pit village locations. There are 43 documented cultural properties along Big Creek.

Fire

The Big Creek drainage has open, grassy slopes on the south faces, and is not heavily timbered on the lower end of the drainage near the confluence with the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Much of the lower portion of the drainage has experienced large recent fires (Silver Creek Fire [1988], Diamond Point Fire [2000]), which have affected the visual integrity. The area has a mosaic of fire scars. Some intensively burned areas are revegetating successfully. Fire has been

absent from the head of the drainage. The drainage has and will continue to support Wildland Fire Use, covered by the FCRONR Fire Management Plan. Fire suppression is active in this drainage.

Recreation and Facilities

The river corridor provides opportunities for boating, hiking, camping, viewing scenery, hunting, and fishing. Several outfitter lodges, a Forest Service guard station, and private residences are located within the Segment 1 corridor. There are 20 buildings in Segment 2 at the Taylor Ranch property belonging to the University of Idaho, two of which burned in the Diamond Point Fire.

The Big Creek area within and outside of the Wilderness is popular for horseback riders. A popular trailhead in the FCRONR Wilderness is located near the Big Creek confluence with Smith Creek. An old mining access road paralleling Big Creek for the first 12 miles below Smith Creek, serves as a non-motorized trail (196) to Crooked Creek. At Crooked Creek, Forest Trail 196 continues as a single-track trail along the river to the confluence with the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.

Within Segment 2 there are landing fields for aircraft at Cabin Creek (also a Forest Service administrative site), Taylor Ranch (private), and Soldier Bar. The entire river is closed to floating and boating from April 1 to May 31, and August 1 to September 30 for the protection of spawning salmon and steelhead listed under the ESA.

Fish and Wildlife

The river provides spawning and rearing habitat for Threatened chinook salmon and steelhead. Steelhead spawning runs may be observed in April and runs of chinook salmon are in August. Threatened bull trout inhabit the stream and its tributaries. The entire river is closed to fishing for spring/summer chinook salmon. Below Smith Creek, fishing for trout is limited to catch and release. Big Creek is considered a native westslope cutthroat trout fishery. The Idaho Fish and Game maintains a fish-counting facility in Rush Creek on the University of Idaho's Taylor Ranch in lower Big Creek.

The Big Creek drainage is considered potential habitat for Threatened Canada lynx. The lower portion of the drainage provides winter range for deer, elk, and mountain goats. Bighorn sheep have been seen along the creek. Black bear are frequently observed, and wolves and cougar are present. Bald eagles may be sighted, but no nesting sites are known in the river corridor.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FRENCH CREEK AREA

Location, Land Ownership, Roads

There are three recommended river segments within the French Creek area: French Creek, Little French Creek, and Jackson Creek (Figure J-6). The headwaters of Little French Creek are in T22N, R3E, Section 17. Little French Creek drains into French Creek. The headwaters of French Creek are in T22N, R3E, Section 15, and the headwaters of Jackson Creek, which drains into French Creek, are in T22N, R4E, Section 6. French Creek drains into the Salmon River, but the recommended French Creek segments in this Study Report end at the Forest boundary (T23N, R3E, Section 1). All segments of French Creek are located in Idaho County, and are managed by the Payette National Forest. A total of 34 miles of French Creek are being recommended for Wild and Scenic River suitability. All 34 miles are located on NFS lands, within the 89,000-acre French Creek Roadless Area. None of the segments are within designated or recommended wilderness.

There are no existing or proposed roads or power lines within the three river segments and their corridors. Motorized and non-motorized trails follow Jackson Creek, Little French Creek, and French Creek.

Segment 1 – Segment 1 (17 miles/5,341 acres) starts at the headwaters of French Creek and continues to the Payette National Forest boundary (Figure J-6).

Segment 2 – Segment 2 (13 miles/3,048 acres) starts at the headwaters of Little French Creek and continues to the confluence with French Creek (Figure J-6).

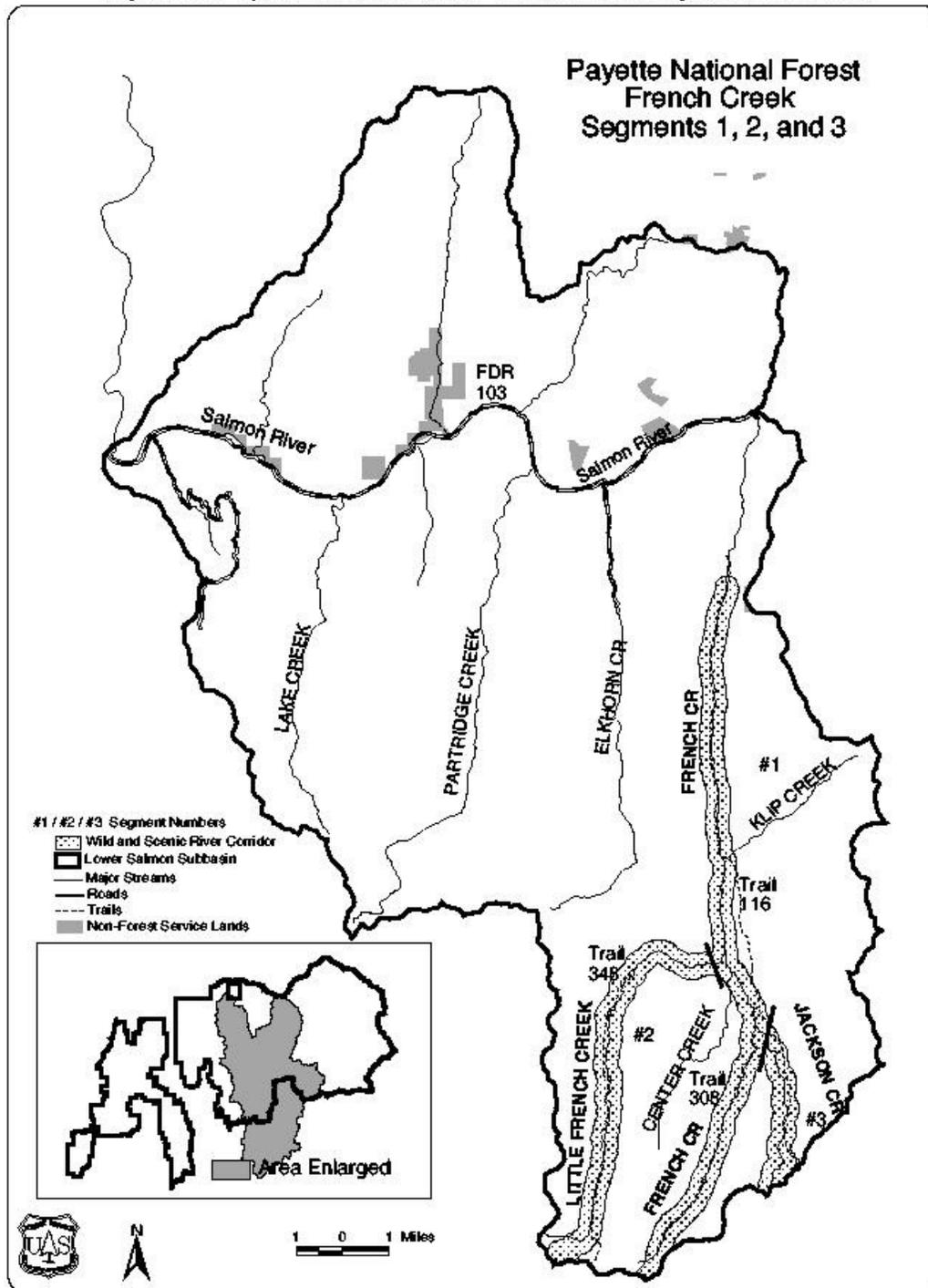
Segment 3 – Segment 3 (4 miles/1,240 acres) begins at the headwaters of Jackson Creek and continues to the confluence with French Creek (Figure J-6).

Setting and Natural Features

French Creek, Little French Creek, and Jackson Creek are recognized for their distinctive visual resources. Cirque basins form the head of French Creek and Little French Creek, and the lower reaches of French Creek flow through a deeply dissected canyon that is highly scenic. The French Creek drainage has extensive granitic rock that is typical of the Idaho batholith. The eligible river segments are in steep glaciated canyons, which contain a mosaic of timber and open meadows or brush. The upper reaches of Little French Creek and French Creek flow through mountain meadows dominated by willows and sedges.

The river corridors are not considered areas of high potential for cultural values. Currently there is insufficient data to determine whether there are historical or cultural sites within the corridors that qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historical Places.

Figure J-6. French Creek



Fire

Much of this drainage has been recently burned by a number of large wildfires. Fire intensity has varied throughout the drainage, ranging from high-intensity stand-replacing burns, to low-intensity burns that result in park-like conditions. Part of this drainage burned in the 1994 Corral Fire, including large portions of Upper French Creek (Segment 1) and Jackson Creek (Segment 3). Lower portions of the drainage burned in the French Creek Fire of 1985. There has been no management-ignited prescribed burning in this drainage, and wildfires are actively suppressed.

Recreation and Facilities

The river corridors provide opportunities for hiking, two-wheel motorized use, camping, viewing scenery, hunting, and fishing. Trail 116 accesses State land at the Forest boundary, but there is no public access through private land to the Salmon River. Private land and steep canyons make exiting the trail at its terminus difficult. The corridor is a popular area for big-game hunting. There is one outfitter and guide who operates in the area during hunting season. Trail 348, which has motorized and non-motorized sections, follows Little French Creek. Non-motorized Trail 308 parallels French Creek to the Trail 116 junction where it becomes motorized. Trail 116 begins at the headwaters of Jackson Creek and is motorized for its entire length.

Fish and Wildlife

Both French Creek and Jackson Creek provide limited spawning and rearing habitat for Threatened chinook salmon and steelhead. Little French Creek does not contain spawning habitat or anadromous fish due to a natural waterfall barrier. Threatened bull trout inhabit French Creek.

The river corridors are considered potential habitat for Threatened Canada lynx. The upper reaches provide summer range for deer and elk, while the lower portion near the Salmon River breaks contains winter spring range for both species. There is possible elk-calving activity near the river. There have been occasional sightings of bald eagles, but no nesting sites are known to exist within the corridors.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS OF ELIGIBILITY AND CLASSIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 directs the Forest Service to determine which river segments have Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORVs), and to recommend to Congress those determined suitable for inclusion in the National Rivers System. This process is accomplished through agency policy related to the Wild and Scenic River Act that requires rivers identified as potential Wild and Scenic Rivers be evaluated as to their eligibility, with the findings documented in the Forest Plan. An eligible river must be free flowing and possess at least one feature that is judged to be outstandingly remarkable. Once deemed eligible, segments must have a suitability study completed to determine if they can be recommended to Congress for inclusion in the National System. It is recommended, but not required, to complete the river suitability study during the Forest Plan revision process. To be found suitable, the benefits of designating the river should outweigh the disadvantages.

This chapter summarizes the results of the eligibility and classification determinations for the five rivers being analyzed in this Study Report. The findings capture the unique and special values that make each of the rivers eligible to be considered for Wild and Scenic River designation.

DETERMINATION OF OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

The five rivers included in this Study Report were identified as eligible in the previous Forest Plans for both the Boise and Payette National Forests (USDA Forest Service 1988, 1990). They were found to be free flowing and have one or more outstanding attributes. The rivers were inventoried for features that were exceptional within their Region of Comparison. This Regional area is described in Chapter II. The resources assessed were identified in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542) and include scenic, recreation, geologic, fisheries, wildlife, historic, and cultural values (comprised of prehistoric, historic, and traditional cultural values). Other similar values, including hydrologic, paleontologic, botanical, and ecological attributes were also reviewed.

For Forest Plan revision, a Draft Suitability Study was completed, and was documented as Appendix E to the Draft Revised Payette Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service 2000). This study identified or confirmed ORVs for the Secesh River, SFSR, Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek.

In May 2001, a group of Payette and Boise National Forest resource specialists gathered to review and verify the previously identified ORVs for each of the five rivers. Some previously identified ORVs were dropped from the final Study Report due to further in-depth analysis, and others were added. The geology ORV was dropped from French Creek, and a botanical and

recreation ORV were added to the SFSR. Criteria used in the review are listed in the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Inventory User's Guide (USDA Forest Service 2001). The results of this review are documented below in the Findings of Eligibility Study section.

Although the determination of value significance is a matter of informed professional judgment and interpretation, this process includes the following:

- The use of an Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) approach,
- Consideration of uniqueness and rarity within the identified Region of Comparison,
- Values must be river related in that they owe their existence or contribute to the functioning of the river system and its immediate environs,
- The use of qualitative guidelines to help determine significance, and
- Verification by other experts in the ORV resource area.

FINDINGS OF ELIGIBILITY STUDY

The following tables describe the eligibility requirements that were met according to defined ORVs found on segments of the five study rivers. Each table denotes the ORVs that were identified for each river, and includes a detailed description of why the river values were considered to be outstandingly remarkable.

Table J-5. Secesh River ORVs and ORV Descriptions

Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV)	Description
(1) Anadromous Fish Habitat	From Lake Creek's headwaters to the confluence with the South Fork Salmon River (SFSR), the Secesh is one of only two rivers left in the Snake River Basin that contains completely wild summer chinook salmon populations. There are no hatcheries that supplement this stretch of river. The fisheries value of the Secesh River is considered outstandingly remarkable based on the diversity of populations, excellent spawning and rearing habitat, and listed fish species (Threatened bull trout, steelhead trout, and chinook salmon).

Table J-6. South Fork Salmon River ORVs and ORV Descriptions

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	Description
(1) Fisheries	The SFSR has an important anadromous fishery and is tributary to the Salmon River. The SFSR segments provide major spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous species. The river supports wild summer chinook salmon and wild steelhead trout. This population of steelhead includes some of the largest individuals in North America. The river also supports bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	Description
(2) Botanical	The river corridor contains significant populations of endemic plant species that are considered rare within the botanical Region of Comparison. Populations of giant helliborine orchid listed as Sensitive can be found near hot springs and cool springs, and in canyon grasslands. The rare Idaho fescue community is an important indicator species for native grassland succession and maintenance related to fire cycles. Yew trees are at the edge of their geographical range.
(3) Scenic	The upper reaches of the SFSR flow through highly scenic meadow and timber landscapes. The middle and lower reaches flow through a highly scenic and deeply dissected canyon within the granitic Idaho batholith. Past wildfires have affected the scenic vistas along the river corridor creating large visual openings, but have not lowered the scenic ORV. Prescribed fires will continue to be ignited in the river corridor, but evidence of these fires usually disappears within two to three years as the low ground vegetation recovers. Gorges, rock outcrops, and cliffs that contrast with the river below, provide incredible vistas. The river flows over rocks and boulders then cascades over impressive rapids. Rustic ranches can be found along some private inholdings along the river corridor, adding to the scenic appeal.
(4) Geology	Hot springs, canyons, oxbows, fossils, and outstanding fluvial erosion features are located along the river corridor.
(5) Cultural Resources	Over 60 cultural properties have been identified within the SFSR area. Five properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places – four of these are related to 19th century Chinese settlement, and one property is a prehistoric archaeological site that also has Forest Service history. The historic ghost town of Knox Ranch is also within the corridor.
(6) Recreation	The SFSR has outstanding white-water boating and nationally recognized fishing opportunities during premier steelhead and chinook salmon seasons. The river corridor also provides recreation opportunities that include hunting, hiking, camping, and snowmobiling. The many hot springs along the river corridor are beautiful and provide the visitor with a remote soaking experience.

Table J-7. Monumental Creek ORVs and ORV Descriptions

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	Description
(1) Fisheries	Monumental Creek has an important anadromous fishery and is a tributary to Big Creek and the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. The river provides major spawning and rearing habitat for wild chinook salmon and wild steelhead trout. It also provides habitat for Threatened bull trout, and supports populations of westslope cutthroat trout.
(2) Scenery	Wildlife viewing opportunities exist along the entire corridor, with moose frequently spotted at Roosevelt Lake. The historic Roosevelt Cemetery, and the flooded town site of Roosevelt are recreational destinations, as is “The Monument”, the geological formation for which the river was named. These sites contribute to the unique scenic opportunities in the area.
(3) Geology	Distinctive geologic formations such as “The Monument”, Challis volcanics, scoured drainages, landslides, Mule Creek Slide, and Roosevelt Lake make this area outstandingly remarkable for geological features.
(4) Cultural Resources	Twelve documented cultural resource sites exist along the river corridor. Adjacent to Monumental Creek and Roosevelt Lake there are historic ruins and evidence of the Thunder Mountain Gold Rush of 1901-1909.

Table J-8. Big Creek ORVs and ORV Descriptions

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	Description
(1) Fisheries	Big Creek has an important anadromous fishery and is a tributary to the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. From Smith Creek to the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, the river provides major spawning and rearing habitats for wild chinook salmon and wild steelhead trout. It also provides habitats for threatened bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.
(2) Cultural Resources	Adjacent to Big Creek there are large and well-preserved American Indian pictographs. There are also several locations where prehistoric Indians had traditional winter house-pit villages. There are 43 documented cultural sites along Big Creek.

Table J-9. French Creek ORVs and ORV Descriptions

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	Description
(1) Fisheries	Segments 1 (French Creek) and 3 (Jackson Creek) are anadromous fisheries. Threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout can access these rivers from the main Salmon River. Segment 2 (Little French Creek) is inaccessible to anadromous fish due to barriers caused by natural falls.
(2) Scenery	All river segments are recognized as having distinct visual resources. The rivers flow through scenic meadows and have large riffle pools. The corridors are undisturbed along the majority of the reaches, although large parts of the drainage have experienced wildfire. These fires have affected the visual quality of the drainage by forming large meadow and park-like stands, but have not lowered the scenic ORV. Scenic cirque basins form the head of the Upper French Creek and Little French Creek drainages, and the lower reaches flow through a deeply dissected canyon with high scenic quality.

DEFINITIONS OF WILD, SCENIC, AND RECREATIONAL RIVERS

When a river or segment is found to be eligible, it is given a classification of Wild, Scenic, or Recreational. The classification of a river is based on the current conditions of the river and the adjacent lands. A Wild classification is the most primitive and least developed. Rivers or sections of rivers classified as Wild are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds and shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These rivers and their corridors represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic river areas contain rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds largely primitive and shorelines mostly undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational river areas contain rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

The primary method for determining river classification is the degree of naturalness, or the degree of evidence of human activity in the river area. The four criteria used to address the degree of naturalness or the degree of evidence of human activity for the three classifications are: 1) Water Resources Development, 2) Shoreline Development, 3) Accessibility, and 4) Water Quality. These criteria are described in the table below.

Table J-10. Wild and Scenic River Act Criteria for River Classification

Criteria	Wild	Scenic	Recreational
Water Resources Development	Free of impoundment	Free of impoundment	Some existing diversions or impoundments. Low dams or other modifications of the waterway are acceptable, provided the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance and the free-flowing status or the ORV is not diminished.
Shoreline Development	Essentially primitive. Little or no evidence of human activity. Presence of a few inconspicuous structures, is acceptable, particularly those of historic or cultural value. A limited amount of domestic grazing or hay production is acceptable. Little or no evidence of past timber harvest is present in the river corridor. No ongoing timber harvest.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. No substantial evidence of human activity. The presence of small communities, dispersed dwellings, or farm structures is acceptable. The presence of grazing, hay production, or row crops is acceptable. Evidence of past or ongoing timber harvest is acceptable, provided the forest appears natural from the riverbank.	Some development. Substantial evidence of human activity may be present. The presence of extensive residential development, and a few commercial structures is acceptable. May have lands developed for the full range of agricultural and forestry uses. May show evidence of past and ongoing timber harvest.
Accessibility	Generally inaccessible except by trail. No roads, railroads, or other provisions for vehicular travel should occur within the river area. Motorized travel on land or water could be permitted, but is generally not compatible. A few existing roads leading to the boundary of the river area are acceptable.	Accessible in places by road. Roads may occasionally reach or bridge the river. The existence of short stretches of conspicuous or longer stretches of inconspicuous roads or railroads is acceptable.	Readily accessible by road or railroad. The existence of parallel roads or railroads on one or both banks as well as bridge crossings and other river access points is acceptable.
Water Quality	Meets or exceeds federal criteria or federally approved state standards for aesthetics, for propagation of fish and wildlife normally adapted to the habitat of the river, and for primary contact recreation (swimming), except where exceeded by natural conditions.	No criteria prescribed by the Wild and Scenic River Act.	No criteria prescribed by the Wild and Scenic River Act.

The classifications for the five study rivers were analyzed and determined using the above criteria. A potential classification was determined for all four criteria, based on the evidence of human activity. As the level of human activity or development increases, the classification changes. For example, the level of water resource development and shoreline development along Segment 1 of the Secesh River best fits the Scenic classification, so its highest potential classification is Scenic (Table J-10). For accessibility, the highest potential classification is Recreational, and for water quality, it is Wild. Because the Recreational classification was determined for one of the four criteria, and Recreational has the most evidence of human activity, Segment 1 of the Secesh River would be classified as Recreational and recommended as such for Wild and Scenic suitability.

Tables J-11 through J-15 display the highest potential classification results reflected in Alternative 2 for the four criteria and for the entire river segments.

Table J-11. Secesh River Segments, Criteria Descriptions, and Classifications

Criteria	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Water Resources Development <i>(Classification)</i>	-Instream erosion control structures (boulders) -Two fish weirs -Small water diversion at Secesh Meadows subdivision (private) -Gabion baskets -Two fish screw traps <i>(Scenic)</i>	None <i>(Wild)</i>	None <i>(Wild)</i>
Shoreline Development <i>(Classification)</i>	-Burgdorf Guard Station -Burgdorf Hot Springs (private) -Chinook and Burgdorf Campgrounds -Sheep allotment -Secesh community (private) <i>(Recreational)</i>	None <i>(Wild)</i>	-Ponderosa Campground -Private ranch <i>(Recreational)</i>
Accessibility <i>(Classification)</i>	-Forest Development Road (FDR) 246 (gravel) -FDR 318, easy access along entire length, visible along most parts -FDR 21, easy access and visible from the river along most of the segment <i>(Recreational)</i>	-Motorized Trail 080 along entire length <i>(Wild)</i>	-FDR 48 easy access and visible for most of its length <i>(Recreational)</i>
Water Quality <i>(Classification)</i>	High <i>(Wild)</i>	High <i>(Wild)</i>	High <i>(Wild)</i>
Highest Potential Segment Classification	Recreational	Wild	Recreational

Table J-12. South Fork Salmon River Segments, Criteria Descriptions, and Classifications

Criteria	Segment 1	Segment 2
Water Resources Development (Classification)	-Fish holding facility, fish weir -Two fish screw traps (Scenic)	None (Wild)
Shoreline Development (Classification)	-Vulcan Hot Springs Trailhead -Knox Ranch (ghost town) -Stolle rental cabin -O&G base camp -Camp Creek, Poverty Flats, Buckhorn, Four-mile, Shiefer, Penny Springs, SFSR Campgrounds -Private cabins -Krassel and South Fork administrative sites -Smith Creek landing strip (private) (Recreational)	-Lower 1.5 miles near the confluence with the Salmon River has private residences and a private ranch (Wild)
Accessibility (Classification)	-FDR 474 easy access and visible from many points along the river -FDR 674 easy access, paved road visible from river along sections of the road, FDR 340 and 337 access and parallel for short distances -FDR 340 -Motorized Trail 076 -Non-motorized Trail 122 and 123 (Recreational)	Non-motorized Trail 122 (Wild)
Water Quality (Classification)	High (Wild)	High (Wild)
Highest Potential Segment Classification	Recreational	Wild

Table J-13. Monumental Creek River Segments, Criteria Descriptions, and Classifications

Criteria	Segment 1	Segment 2
Water Resources Development (Classification)	None (Wild)	None (Wild)
Shoreline Development (Classification)	None (Wild)	Private ranch (Wild)
Accessibility (Classification)	FDR 375 parallels entire length of road and is visible along most points (Recreational)	Non-motorized Trail 005 (Wild)
Water Quality (Classification)	High (Wild)	High (Wild)
Highest Potential Segment Classification	Recreational	Wild

Table J-14. Big Creek River Segments, Criteria Descriptions, and Classifications

Criteria	Segment 1	Segment 2
Water Resources Development (Classification)	None directly on Big Creek, several minor hydroelectric power sources and diversions on tributaries <i>(Scenic)</i>	Taylor Ranch (private) has hydropower, the diversion is small, off Big Creek but within ¼ mile corridor and on NFS lands <i>(Wild)</i>
Shoreline Development (Classification)	-Big Creek work center -Outfitter lodges -Private residences <i>(Recreational)</i>	Private ranch <i>(Wild)</i>
Accessibility (Classification)	FDR 340 parallels entire length, road visible along most points <i>(Recreational)</i>	Non-motorized Trail 196 <i>(Wild)</i>
Water Quality (Classification)	High <i>(Wild)</i>	High <i>(Wild)</i>
Highest Potential Segment Classification	Recreational	Wild

Table J-15. French Creek River Segments, Criteria Descriptions, and Classifications

Criteria	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Water Resources Development (Classification)	None <i>(Wild)</i>	None <i>(Wild)</i>	None <i>(Wild)</i>
Shoreline Development (Classification)	Sheep allotment <i>(Wild)</i>	Sheep allotment <i>(Wild)</i>	Sheep allotment <i>(Wild)</i>
Accessibility (Classification)	Non-motorized Trail 308 <i>(Wild)</i>	Partially motorized Trail 348 <i>(Wild)</i>	Motorized Trail 116 <i>(Wild)</i>
Water Quality (Classification)	High <i>(Wild)</i>	High <i>(Wild)</i>	High <i>(Wild)</i>
Highest Potential Segment Classification	Wild	Wild	Wild

CHAPTER IV

ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the issues and alternatives considered for each of the study rivers. Included are issues and alternatives that were used to analyze potential effects in this Study Report, and issues and alternatives that were considered but not analyzed in detail. The alternatives were developed in response to environmental and social issues identified through scoping. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to “identify and assess the reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment” (40 CFR 1500.2[e]).

ISSUES

Major Issues

Public opinion varies considerably about whether to recommend the five rivers in this Study Report as suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. During the scoping period, opinions were received from individuals, agencies, and organizations. This scoping period occurred during past suitability study work and during the Boise and Payette National Forest Plan revisions. Those who commented during the scoping period were either in favor or against recommending these rivers as suitable, with slightly more in favor of recommending for suitability. Interest levels and opinions varied for each river.

Public opinion is important in developing alternatives to the proposed action and in selecting an alternative for implementation. The range of alternatives developed addresses the range of issues brought forth in the public comments.

Issue 1 - Potential effects of precluding impoundments or other major water resource projects

Recommendation and designation of any of the five rivers as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational would prevent the construction of a dam, water conduit, reservoir, powerhouse, large water transmission line, or similar structure so as to protect the river’s free-flowing character. Currently, there are no proposals for water development, but recommendation and designation would preclude future water development proposals such as impoundments for power, irrigation, flood control, or other uses.

Issue 2 - Potential effects on included private lands and uses

Private landowners within the river corridors have concerns that recommendation and designation could restrict current uses of their land and increase public recreation use in the area, which in turn could result in traffic congestion, trash problems, sanitation disposal concerns, trespass, and private road maintenance concerns.

Issue 3 - Potential effects on mineral extraction opportunities and current mineral leases and claims

Although recommendation and designation would not affect valid existing mineral rights on NFS lands, it would affect future mineral extraction along NFS lands within a Wild river and its corridor. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act specifies that if a river is classified as Wild, the river and the quarter mile corridor on each side will be withdrawn from future mineral entry, although valid existing mineral rights would be honored.

Issue 4 - Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities

Timber management practices, prescribed fire, mineral activities, road development, and future recreational or private development facilities could all have potential effects on the scenic values of the river corridors.

Other Issues

The following issues were considered, but were not major factors in developing alternatives to address the effects of suitability recommendation. These issues were assessed in relation to the potential effects that a Wild or Recreational recommendation might have on them. There are no river segments recommended as Scenic. Under No Action, there would be no recommendation for suitability, so there would be no potential effects from recommendation. These issues are described below, along with rationale for their exclusion from further analysis in this Study Report.

Special Uses

The recommendation of rivers as suitable could restrict future options for special uses of NFS lands within the river corridors. These include such uses as pipelines, hydropower development, utility lines, outfitter bases, highway expansion projects, and fish hatchery projects. The design or location of future special use structures or projects would most likely be restricted, however, some uses may not be allowed at all if standards to protect river values cannot be met. Restrictions would be much greater under a Wild classification than under a Recreational classification. However, most of the segments classified as Wild are already in designated wilderness areas, so wilderness restrictions would also apply, even under the No Action alternative. Under a Recreational classification, the primary restrictions would be to major water resource projects, and these effects are analyzed and disclosed under Major Issue 1, above.

Timber Harvest

Recommendation of the five rivers as suitable could affect timber harvest activity in select river segments. For river segments classified as Wild, timber harvest would be prohibited within the quarter mile corridor. Timber outside of the quarter mile boundary, but within the visual corridor (what can be seen from the river), would be managed and harvested in a manner that provides special emphasis on visual quality. In the case of a catastrophic event, potential salvage opportunities would be lost under a Wild classification. Many of the segments classified as Wild occur in wilderness areas or recommended wilderness, where timber harvest activities are already restricted, so the effects on timber harvest through suitability recommendation would be minimal in these areas.

Timber harvest activities would be allowed in river segments recommended as Recreational (except in wilderness, recommended wilderness, and IRAs), as long as those activities were consistent with other Forest Plan management direction for the area. Therefore, there would be no effects on timber harvesting as a result of Recreational classification recommendations. No river segments are recommended as Scenic.

Recreation Opportunities

Overall, suitability recommendation and designation as a Wild and Scenic River could bring more recreationists to that river. Under any classification, future reservoir-related slack-water recreation opportunities would be eliminated.

Under a Wild classification, motorized use generally would not be allowed in the river corridor, and the river segment would remain free of impoundments to protect river-related recreation settings. Hiking, biking, kayaking, rafting, and other non-motorized activities could occur in these areas.

Under a Recreational classification, some development would be allowed, including diversions and impoundments. Motorized trails, boat launch facilities, motorized and non-motorized boating, roads, trails, and interpretation kiosks are allowed. Current recreation activities would continue. No river segments are recommended as Scenic.

TES Wildlife, Plants, and Fish

The effects to wildlife, plants and fish currently listed under the ESA or on the Regional Forester's Sensitive list, are similar for the different classifications. Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species are already protected under laws, regulations, regional policies, and Forest Plan direction, and these safeguards would continue under all alternatives and recommended classifications. Suitability recommendation would not adversely affect any Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive plant species, and could provide some additional protection of habitats. However, the increased use associated with Wild and Scenic River recommendation and potential designation, could adversely affect fish, wildlife, and plants through potential shoreline trampling, sediment deposition, and human disturbance.

Under a Wild classification, no timber harvests would be allowed, so large trees and species dependent on them would persist until affected by natural disturbance. Most of the segments recommended for Wild classification are already within wilderness, where timber harvesting and other activities are already not permitted. Wild designation may limit some habitat improvement projects that help maintain old forest and other natural habitats for listed or Sensitive species.

Under a Recreational classification, current activities would continue subject to the laws, regulations, regional policies, and Forest Plan direction guiding the management of Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species habitat found in these areas. No river segments are recommended as Scenic.

Fish Habitat Improvement Projects

Fish habitat improvement structures are generally compatible with the values for which all five rivers are being recommended. Under a Wild classification, rocks, logs, and other natural-appearing structures are compatible, but major stream-altering projects and concrete structures would not be allowed. Under a Recreational classification, primitive materials, gabions, concrete structures, and other non-native materials could be used if they appear natural. The visual management system would require structures to blend in with the natural setting, regardless of whether or not the rivers are recommended for designation.

Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing is a compatible use of land under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and is allowed under a Wild, Scenic, and Recreational classification as long as it is consistent with protecting and enhancing Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORVs) identified for a particular river. Grazing would continue to be regulated by allotment management plans and specific management area direction. Grazing practices would be modified to protect river values if resource damage were occurring.

No sheep or cattle livestock grazing currently occurs in the SFSR, Big Creek, or Monumental Creek drainages. Some sheep grazing occurs in the French Creek and Secesh River drainages, and use is currently limited to 30 percent utilization of herbaceous vegetation, or once-over grazing, and there are many other grazing practice limitations in place that are designed to protect listed fish species and their habitats.

Cultural Resources

River recommendation for Wild and Scenic status would not result in substantial benefits or threats to cultural resource sites, but would generally enable better monitoring and retention of cultural resources by preventing dams and resulting flooding of river corridors. Reduced management-related disturbance would decrease the potential damage to properties, particularly under a Wild classification; however, increased visitation could increase vandalism or theft. Historic and prehistoric sites are managed and protected already through the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archeological Resource Protection Act, and the Forest Plans. Recommendation for a Wild and Scenic designation would not change these provisions.

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH WILD AND SCENIC RIVER RECOMMENDATION

Although this was not raised as a specific issue, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sections 4a and 5c, requires an economic analysis. The results of this analysis are summarized below

Land Acquisition

This is the cost of acquisition—fee title or easement—of lands determined necessary for protection of river values. Recommended easement purchases are reviewed and disclosed in the Potential Effects on Included Private Lands and Uses section of Chapter V for each river corridor. These purchases would be financed with dollars from the Land and Water Conservation fund and would be appropriated by Congress.

Shared Administration

This is the extent to which the agency proposes that the administration of the river be shared by local and State agencies, including the costs. The majority of the river segments are within the Payette and Boise National Forests. There are very small amounts of State land within the recommended river corridors. The Idaho Department of Water Resources has authority and responsibility over water rights, water ditches, and diversions. If Congress designates the rivers in this Study Report, the Forest Service would be the administering agency.

The respective counties (Valley and Idaho) have control over uses on private lands. There are opportunities for coordination between the Forest Service and the counties for planning and zoning. Valley County has comprehensive planning, and wetlands and flood plain protection on private lands.

Cost of Administration

This is the cost of administration expected for management plan preparation and implementation. Under the action alternatives, suitability recommendation would not result in any immediate significant administration costs for the Forest Service. However, if Congress officially designates any of the rivers for inclusion in the National System, there would be initial costs in developing river management plans and adjusting management resources to implement those plans.

The financial impacts of management and administration of the rivers as a result of Wild and Scenic designation is expected to be \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually for all five rivers, in addition to the cost of writing a River Management Plan for each designated river. The costs of developing individual River Management Plans range from \$25,000 to \$35,000 – the total cost would range from \$125,000 to \$175,000, if all rivers in this Study Report are designated. Congress may allot one-time only funds toward River Management Plan preparation, which is a requirement of Wild and Scenic designation. If Congress allots no funds, the Forests have to absorb the costs.

Other miscellaneous costs such as easements, fee title acquisitions, or land exchanges vary and are unknown at this time.

Recommendation or designation should not adversely affect the Forests' ability to manage current responsibilities and commitments, but may make the Payette and Boise National Forests more competitive for obtaining river management -related funding.

Local Economies

Recommendation of any or all of the five rivers in this Study Report could affect economic opportunities and property values. Specific concerns include quality of life, economic impacts to local communities resulting from designation, water flow regulation, purchase of easements on private lands, and potential growth limitations.

River segments that are recommended as Wild would have the greatest impacts on commodity production, however only two river segments recommended as Wild (Segment 1 of French Creek and Segment 2 of the Secesh River) are outside of wilderness or recommended wilderness. Under a Wild classification, timber harvesting is not allowed along with future mineral entry, construction of major recreation facilities, roads, power lines, ski areas, and other features—all of which could have a negative effect on local economies.

Conversely, local economies would likely be stimulated by increased rafting, kayaking, fishing, and tourism generated by any rivers recommended or designated as Wild and Scenic. Additionally, there would be positive impacts on local property values and marketability for private land located along these river corridors. These impacts are discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

ALTERNATIVES STUDIED IN DETAIL

Alternative 1 (No Action)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the consideration of a No Action alternative (40 CFR 1502.14d). The goal of this alternative is to provide a baseline of comparison to assist in determining the issues and effects of recommendation in Alternatives 2 and 3. Under the No Action alternative, the five rivers and their corridors would no longer be considered eligible for Wild and Scenic River status, but would be protected by existing laws and regulations, as well as the revised Boise and Payette National Forest Plan management direction. This alternative would allow for the future construction of dams and related structures, although none are currently proposed. Under this alternative, private landowners would not be affected by river designation on or near their private land. Timber harvest and mineral exploration and development would continue, subject to the revised Boise and Payette National Forest Plan management direction.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 recommends all five rivers for designation at the most restrictive classification possible, based on the classification criteria. (Table J-16).

Table J-16. Recommended Segments and Their Classifications – Alternative 2

River	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Secesh	Recreational	Wild	Recreational
SFSR	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Monumental	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Big Creek	Recreational	Wild	N/A
French Creek	Wild	Wild	Wild

This alternative would protect the free-flowing character and unique values for all five recommended rivers until such time as Congress makes a decision on official designation.

Recommendation for designation for Big Creek (Segment 2), Monumental Creek (Segment 2), and SFSR (Segment 2), would provide protection against water development projects beyond existing wilderness protection and revised Payette Forest Plan management direction. Although the President may authorize water resource projects in wilderness areas, Congressional approval is needed for any water impoundment projects on designated rivers.

Alternative 2 recommends the purchase of conservation easements and acquisition of titles on certain private lands, which are described in detail in Chapter V.

Alternative 3

This alternative also recommends all five rivers in the Study Report for designation; however two rivers are recommended at a less restrictive classification level (Table J-17). For Alternative 3, the Secesh River and French Creek are recommended as Recreational, as opposed to Wild for Alternative 2. Recommended designation for SFSR, Big Creek, and Monumental Creek would remain the same as in Alternative 2 because the majority of these Segment 2s are within wilderness. No purchase of easements or fee titles acquisitions would be proposed on private lands with this alternative.

Table J-17. Recommended Segments and their Classifications - Alternative 3

River	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Secesh	Recreational	Recreational	Recreational
SFSR	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Monumental	Recreational	Wild	N/A
Big Creek	Recreational	Wild	N/A
French Creek	Recreational	Recreational	Recreational

This alternative would protect the free-flowing character and unique values for all five recommended rivers until such time as Congress makes a decision on official designation.

Alternative 3 was developed to display the effects that different classifications could have on the issues. Due to the existing restrictive measures and management practices already in place throughout most of the recommended river segments, there is not a wide range of effects. Because of this limited range of effects, elimination of this alternative was considered by the ID Team, but it was concluded that it was important to be able to show a range, however slight, to the public and the decision maker. The decision maker can choose to recommend any alternative, mix or portion or alternatives, and/or combination of classifications that best fit the desired recommendation to Congress for each river in this Suitability Study.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT STUDIED IN DETAIL

During the analysis process, several alternatives were presented and explored to address certain issues. These alternatives are described below along with an explanation as to why they did not merit further analysis or consideration.

- 1. Add an alternative that analyzes additional classification variations.** This alternative was dropped from study as it was determined to be unnecessary. There were no issues identified that could be better resolved under additional sets of proposed classifications. Three sets of classifications are already addressed and analyzed in Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Scenic classifications were considered for several of the rivers, but this classification would only minimally affect management practices along the river corridor and therefore was not considered as an option for any of the river segments. The recommendations for Monumental Creek, Big Creek and SFSR remain the same in Alternative 3 as Alternative 2 because their Segment 2's are entirely, or almost entirely within existing wilderness. Wilderness designation has already withdrawn these areas from future mineral exploration, so that issue would not change with a less restrictive river classifications such as Scenic or Recreational. Timber harvest and other effects to the scenic environment are also restricted in wilderness areas, so management activities pertaining to those areas are also restricted under existing wilderness prohibitions. The decision maker for this Study Report can use a combination of any of the analyzed alternatives and recommend a mix of classifications and designations if they find it necessary.
- 2. The Draft Study No Action Alternative.** The No Action Alternative was modified from the Draft to the Final Suitability Study Report. The Draft Report called for the five study rivers to remain eligible in the future until a suitability study was complete. This alternative was found to be confusing for reviewers. This Study Report is a Suitability Study, and once the rivers are analyzed, if they are found unsuitable, they should no longer remain eligible rivers. Under the new No Action Alternative in this Final Study Report, the rivers would not be eligible for Wild and Scenic River status under the currently described ORVs. If new ORVs are determined sometime in the future, these rivers could again be recommended for designation, but in the meantime, management of the rivers and their corridors would revert to existing management direction and prescriptions for those areas. The new No Action Alternative in this Final Study Report replaces Alternative 1 and 4 in the Draft Study.
- 3. Alternative 4 in the Draft Suitability Study.** Alternative 4 in the Draft Suitability Study for the Secesh River, SFSR, Monumental Creek, Big Creek, and French Creek (Appendix E to the Payette National Forest Revised Draft Land Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 2000) proposed to release all five rivers from consideration for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System. This alternative was essentially the same as and therefore replaced by the revised No Action alternative for this Final Suitability Study.

COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES STUDIED IN DETAIL

This section compares the alternatives considered in detail. Tables J-18 through J-22 summarize the potential effects for each alternative, by river, for the four major issues in this chapter.

Table J-18. Summary of Effects of Alternatives for the Secesh River

Alternative	Recommended Classification	Issue 1 - Potential effects on impoundments or other diversions	Issue 2 - Potential effects on included private lands and uses	Issue 3 - Potential effects on mineral opps. and current leases and claims	Issue 4 - Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities
1 (No Action)	No classification because there would be no recommendation.	Would allow for potential major diversion or dams and large hydropower development.	No effect. County government could zone to protect and maintain river values.	No effect, mineral projects could proceed as long as they meet revised Payette NF Plan management area direction.	No effect, scenic quality of the river corridor would be managed under revised Payette NF Plan VQO standards for the river corridor.
2	Segments 1, 3 – Recreational Segment 2 – Wild	Segments 1 and 3 would allow for existing low dams and diversions to remain, no new structures would be allowed. All water supply dams and major diversions would be prohibited in Segment 2.	River designation recommendation could bring more impacts associated with additional visitor use. Segments 1 and 3 have proposed easement purchases from willing sellers. Segment 1 has the possibility of added trespass, road deterioration, garbage, and sanitation problems due to use. Segment 2 has no private development.	Limited effects, as mineral potential is low to moderate for all segments. Segment 2 would be withdrawn from mineral entry but valid existing rights would be honored.	Revised Payette NF Plan VQOs are more restrictive than Wild and Scenic River scenic quality standards, so there would be no effect with designation recommendation.
3	Segments 1,2,3 – Recreational	All three segments would allow for existing low dams and diversions to remain, no new structures would be allowed. All water supply dams and major diversions would be prohibited.	No easements or purchases are proposed under this alternative for any segment. Recommendation for designation could bring impacts associated with additional visitor use as listed above for Alternative 2.	Recreational recommendation for all three segments would allow for future mineral exploration and development on all three segments, providing river ORVs are maintained.	Same as Alternative 2.

Table J-19. Summary of Effects of Alternatives for the South Fork Salmon River.

Alternative	Recommended Classification	Issue 1 - Potential effects on impoundments or other diversions	Issue 2 - Potential effects on included private lands and uses	Issue 3 - Potential effects on mineral opps. and current leases and claims	Issue 4 - Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities
1 (No Action)	There would be no classification because there would be no recommendation.	Would allow for potential major diversions and dams and large hydropower development.	No effect. County could zone to maintain and protect river values.	No effect. Mineral projects could proceed as long as they meet revised Boise and Payette NF Plan management area direction.	No effect. Scenic quality of the river would be managed under revised Boise and Payette NF Plan VQO standards for the river corridor.
2	Segment 1— Recreational Segment 2 – Wild	Segment 1 would allow for existing low dams and diversions to remain. No new structures would be allowed on either segment. All future water supply dams and major diversions would be prohibited in Segment 2.	River designation recommendation could bring more impacts associated with additional visitor use which could include added trespass, road deterioration, garbage, and sanitation problems due to use. Proposed easement and acquisition of fee title purchases would affect appropriate landowners providing them additional income, but encumbering the land with the easements.	Maintain river's ORV values, but mineral extraction could occur in Segment 1. The majority of Segment 2 has already been withdrawn from future mineral entry because it is in the Wilderness. Thus, no effect on Segment 2.	Revised Boise and Payette NF Plan VQOs are more restrictive than Wild and Scenic River scenic quality standards, so there would be no effect with designation recommendation.
3	Same as Alternative 2	Same as Alternative 2.	No purchase of easements or fee title acquisitions with this alternative. Other effects same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.

Table J-20. Summary of Effects of Alternatives for Monumental Creek

Alternative	Recommended Classification	Issue 1 - Potential effects on impoundments or other diversions	Issue 2 - Potential effects on included private lands and uses	Issue 3 - Potential effects on mineral opps. and current leases and claims	Issue 4 - Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities
1 (No Action)	None.	Would allow for potential major diversions and dams and large hydropower facilities.	No effect.	No effect. Mineral projects could proceed as long as they meet management area standards and guidelines in the revised Payette NF Plan. Segment 2 is closed to mineral entry due to existing wilderness classification.	Scenic quality VQOs would need to be retained as outlined in the revised Payette NF Plan for Segments 1 and 2. Segment 2 is located within wilderness and visual quality would be maintained to wilderness standards.
2	Segment 1— Recreational Segment 2— Wild	Segment 1 would allow for existing low dams and diversions to remain, but no major diversions and dams would be allowed. All major water supply dams and diversions would be prohibited in Segment 2.	Along Segment 1, river designation recommendation could bring more impacts associated with additional visitor use which could include added trespass, road deterioration, garbage, and sanitation problems due to use. Proposed easement and acquisition of fee title purchases would affect appropriate landowners providing them additional income, but encumbering the land with the easements.	Minimal effect to Segment 1 because mineral development can still occur as long as river ORVs are not devalued or jeopardized. Segment 2 is already withdrawn from mineral entry, so no effect.	Revised Payette NF Plan VQOs are more restrictive than Wild and Scenic River scenic quality standards, so there would be no effect with designation recommendation.
3	Same as Alternative 2	Same as Alternative 2.	No proposed purchase of easements or fee title, otherwise same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.

Table J-21. Summary of Effects of Alternatives for Big Creek

Alternative	Recommended Classification	Issue 1 - Potential effects on impoundments or other diversions	Issue 2 - Potential effects on included private lands and uses	Issue 3 - Potential effects on mineral opps. and current leases and claims	Issue 4 - Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities
1	None.	Would allow for potential major diversions and dams and major hydropower facilities.	No effect. Idaho County could zone to maintain river values.	No effect, mineral projects could proceed as long as they meet Payette NF Plan direction.	Maintain revised 2001 Payette NF Plan VQO standards.
2	Segment 1— Recreational Segment 2— Wild	Segment 1 would allow for existing low dams and diversions to remain, but no major diversions and dams would be allowed. All water supply dams and major diversions would be prohibited.	Along Segment 1, river designation could bring more impacts associated with additional visitor use which could include added trespass, road deterioration due to added use, garbage and sanitation problems due to use. No purchases are proposed for Segment 2.	Minimal effect to Segment 1 because mineral development can still occur as long as Recreational river standards are not lowered. Segment 2 is already withdrawn from mineral entry, so no effect.	Revised Payette NF Plan VQOs are more restrictive than Wild and Scenic River scenic quality standards, so there would be no effect with designation recommendation.
3	Same as Alternative 2	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.

Table J-22. Summary of Effects of Alternatives for French Creek

Alternative	Recommended Classification	Issue 1 - Potential effects on impoundments or other diversions	Issue 2 - Potential effects on included private lands and uses	Issue 3 - Potential effects on mineral opps. and current leases and claims	Issue 4 - Potential effects on long-term protection of scenic qualities
1 (No Action)	None.	Would allow for potential major diversions and dams and hydropower facilities.	No effect.	No effect. Mineral projects could proceed as long as they meet revised Payette NF Plan direction.	No effect. Manage scenic quality under revised Payette NF Plan VQOs.
2	Segments 1,2,3—Wild	All water supply dams and major diversions would be prohibited.	No effect. There is no private land within the French Creek corridors.	Valid existing rights would be honored. Segments 1, 2, and 3 would be withdrawn from mineral entry. However, mineral development potential is low.	Segments would have longer-term protection of scenic values than the revised Payette NF Plan would provide. New projects could not lower scenic ORV values. Segments 1, 2, and 3 would maintain a Preservation VQO.
3	Segments 1,2, 3—Recreational	Segment 1, 2 and 3 would allow for existing low dams and diversions to remain, but no major diversions and dams would be allowed. All water supply dams and major diversions would be prohibited.	No effect. There is no private land within the French Creek corridors.	Maintain river's ORV values, but mineral extraction could occur in all three segments.	Manage for scenic quality under revised Payette NF Plan VQOs. They are more restrictive than Wild and Scenic Recreational guidelines.

CHAPTER V

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the environment affected by the alternatives discussed in Chapter IV and forms the analytical basis for comparing the alternatives. The effects of each alternative are discussed for each of the major issues identified during scoping. Wild and Scenic River recommendations vary among the alternatives according to the different classifications recommended for each river segment.

Effects range from no change from the current management to legal protection of Wild and Scenic River values. The assessment of environmental consequences considers management of the river segments once they are recommended in this Study Report and designated by Congress. Within three fiscal years of designation, the Forests would prepare a river management plan detailing specific policy.

EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Issue 1: Potential Effects Of Precluding Impoundments Or Other Major Water Resource Projects.

The Affected Environment for Issue 1

The Wild and Scenic River study segments may be described by the watershed areas in which they occur. For the scope of this analysis, 5th level Hydrologic Unit (HU) boundaries are used. For the Secesh River, Segments 1 and 2 are located in the Upper Secesh HU, while Segment 3 is in the Lower Secesh HU. The Boise National Forest portion of SFSR Segment 1 is located in the Blackmare-Fourmile and Buckhorn-Fitsum HUs. The Payette portion of Segment 1 is located in both the Lower and Middle SFSR HUs, while Segment 2 is in the Lower SFSR HU. Both segments of Monumental Creek are contained in the Monumental Creek HU. Segments 1 and 2 of Big Creek are located in the Upper Big Creek HU, while Segment 3 runs through the Upper Big Creek, Beaver-Gold, Crooked-Buck, and Cabin-Canyon HUs. Segments 1, 2, and 3 of French Creek are all contained within the French Creek HU.

Hydrology and Geomorphology - All study rivers have similar hydrologic flow regimes. Peak (high) flows generally occur during May and June and are the result of snowmelt in the upper elevations. Base (low) flows generally start during late August to early September and last through February. During this period, the main mechanism for stream recharge is ground water, which is stored primarily in riparian areas.

Geologically, the terrestrial areas of the watersheds vary. The **SFSR** runs through a portion of the Idaho batholith known as the Core Granitics. Most of this area was not glaciated and has

high erosion rates. The **Secesh River** and **French Creek** flow through a portion of the Idaho batholith that was glaciated. Although the erosion rates in this area are lower than the Core Granitics, the relatively shallow soils (as a result of glaciation) and high elevations give this area the highest water-producing watersheds. **Big and Monumental Creeks** run through geology known as the Challis Volcanics. These watersheds were formed by extrusive basalt flows that were later uplifted through faulting.

Water Quality - Beneficial uses of these streams have been established by the State of Idaho. They include salmonid spawning, cold-water biota, primary and secondary recreation, agricultural water supply, wildlife habitats, and aesthetics, although not all streams have been assigned all uses.

Water quality of the study stream segments is generally good to excellent and is due primarily to the lack of development within drainages. Although the SFSR had been identified as “water quality limited” (see Glossary), with sediment as the pollutant of concern, stream segments are capable of supporting spawning salmonids, an identified beneficial use.

Flows necessary to protect both identified beneficial uses and other flow-dependent values—such as fisheries, aquatic habitat, channel maintenance, and riparian areas—would be those that mimic the natural flow regimes.

Water Uses and Developments - Any major impoundment for water storage or hydroelectric power would cause a river segment to be ineligible, but none of the tentatively suitable rivers are actively being considered for such a project at the present time. It should be noted that the probability of such a proposal on any of the five study rivers, in the foreseeable future, is remote. Future low dams and diversions, transmission lines, and other facilities may affect the classification of the river, depending on their visibility and extent.

Secesh River - There are no existing impoundments within the stream corridor. Instream erosion control structures, two fish weirs, a small water diversion facility at Secesh Meadows subdivision on private land, and a gabion basket are located in Segment 1. There are no structures or diversions in Segments 2 or 3. Zena Ranch, located in Segment 3, has a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) exemption for a special use permit for a small hydropower project on Zena Creek, within the river corridor, but not directly on the Secesh.

Analysis of salmon spawning gravel shows sedimentation to be less than in other areas in the SFSR drainage. Hot springs in the upper, central, and lower Secesh, and Lake Creek (Burgdorf) portions of the drainage add to the aesthetic and biological diversity. There are no proposed water resource developments along Lake Creek or the Secesh River at this time.

South Fork Salmon River - There are no existing impoundments within the Segment 1 stream corridor. However, several small domestic water diversion facilities exist along the river where it passes through private land. Segment 1 has two fish traps, a fish holding facility, a fish weir, and a fish screw trap. The Hettinger Ranch, located on the border of Segment 1 and 2, has a FERC license for a permitted hydropower project on Smith Creek. This is within the quarter mile corridor, but not directly on the SFSR.

Monumental Creek - Segments 1 and 2 do not have any water resource developments.

Big Creek - There are no hydropower facilities located directly on Big Creek, but there are several located within the river corridor on side streams. In Segment 1 there is one FERC exempted hydropower plant permitted on Government Creek and one FERC licensed hydropower plant on an unnamed creek on National Forest System (NFS) lands, just north of Edwardsburg. There are two small hydroelectric facilities in Segment 2 that provide electricity to two facilities, one on private land and the other on NFS land. The facilities are not directly on Big Creek, but are on side tributaries (Lick Creek, No Name Creek, unnamed creek above Big Creek Lodge). In Segment 2, the Taylor Ranch has a small hydropower facility. The small diversion is located on a tributary to Big Creek, but is within the river corridor and on NFS land under a special use permit.

French Creek - There are no existing impoundments or known potential water resource development sites within the stream corridor. In the 1980s a hydroelectric development proposal for the headwaters of French Creek was submitted to the FERC. The proposed development was located about one mile downstream from the Forest boundary. This proposal and several others were dropped when a study completed by FERC (Cluster Impact Assessment FEIS) concluded there would be detrimental cumulative effects to the environment.

Direct and Indirect Effects for Issue 1

Under **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, none of the five rivers would be recommended for designation to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This alternative would not restrict future options for impoundments or other major water diversions within the river corridors. The river corridors would be managed under revised Boise (SFSR only) and Payette National Forest management direction and prescriptions pertaining to the specific river corridors.

Uses foregone under this alternative would be the potential loss of future Wild and Scenic River designation for the five rivers because of possible degradation to ORVs. Without designation, certain projects could be allowed to proceed that could change the recognized ORVs of the rivers and thus remove them from future Wild and Scenic River eligibility.

Alternatives 2 and 3 have different classifications for the recommended river segments. Congressional designation of any river segment would prevent the construction of a dam or reservoir on that designated segment of river. Protection of the designated river's free-flowing character would extend in perpetuity regardless of the classification. Currently, it is not expected that designation of any of the five rivers would affect the ability to meet anticipated needs for electricity, irrigation water, or flood control.

Upon designation, uses foregone in Alternatives 2 and 3 would be the ability to build any major water storage holding facility/reservoir and associated dam on any of the five rivers. Any water-based reservoir recreation opportunities would also be foregone.

Cumulative Effects for Issue 1

The nearby Salmon River, into which all the recommended rivers eventually flow, is already a designated Wild and Scenic River. A portion of the Snake River, the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, and Rapid River are also designated Wild and Scenic Rivers on or adjacent to the Payette National Forest. The designated portions of these rivers are no longer available for hydropower production. Designation of any of the five rivers in this Study Report would add to rivers in the immediate area no longer available for hydropower production. But there are numerous other rivers in the area that do not meet Wild and Scenic River eligibility standards and that would be available for this purpose if so needed in the future. Therefore, designation of any or all of the five rivers in this Study Report would not impede hydropower production in the future.

For Alternatives 2 and 3, the free-flowing character and classification for designated rivers would be protected into perpetuity. Designation of recommended rivers would prevent future impoundment, but there are no foreseeable future plans or anticipated needs for such facilities within the recommended river segments. Although Segment 2 of Big Creek, Monumental Creek, and most of Segment 2 for the SFSR are in wilderness and are therefore afforded wilderness protection under the Wilderness Act, wilderness designation alone does not offer complete protection against future water impoundment projects.

Issue 2: Potential Effects On Included Private Land And Uses.

This issue addresses the potential effects that recommending any or all of the five rivers in the Study Report would have on private landowners and the use of their land within the recommended river corridors. Private land uses along the rivers include livestock grazing, outfitter and guide lodges, private residences, mining operations, and State lands. Mining operations are addressed under Issue 3.

The Affected Environment for Issue 2

Private lands in the recommended river segments are described below. The acreage numbers displayed reflect the total acreage for the private land parcel, not just lands within the river corridor.

Secesh River, Segment 1 – The following private lands are in Segment 1 of the Secesh River.

Scarrow private land (T23N, R4E, Section 2)(60 acres) – The Bonneville Power Administration has recently proposed purchasing a conservation easement in the river corridor riparian areas to protect critical fish habitat. If these negotiations fail, the river corridor management plan should include the option to (1) acquire a fee title on a willing seller basis, (2) acquire a conservation easement, or (3) acquire a title or easement through exchange.

Burgdorf Hot Springs (T22N, R4E, Section 1)(160 acres) – On October 26, 1998, the Bonneville Power Administration obtained a conservation easement on 88 acres of this property. The objective of the easement is to “preserve and protect in perpetuity the natural wildlife, scenic, and open space features of the property.” Future development rights are foregone, and existing uses such as livestock grazing, are strictly managed to prevent adverse impacts to the riparian

habitat. Idaho Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe are the delegated managers of the easement. No additional protection measures are needed for this property.

State Section 36 (T23N R4E)(520 acres) – This parcel was acquired in September 2000 as part of State Number 5 land exchange and is now National Forest System land.

Secesh Meadows private land (T22N R5E)(638 acres) – This area contains critical habitat for Threatened fish and is composed of wetlands that are not suited for development. The area has no comprehensive plan, protective zoning, or wetlands protection through Idaho County ordinances. The river corridor management plan should include the option to (1) acquire a fee title on a willing seller basis, (2) acquire conservation easements, or (3) acquire a title or easement through exchange. Because the property is of mineral character, exchange would only be considered if the owner was willing to donate mineral rights to the United States. Although development of these lands would not be contrary to Recreational river status, it could lead to water quality and Threatened species impacts. Therefore, acquisitions or exchanges related to this parcel should be prioritized on the basis of protecting those lands most unsuitable for development.

Secesh River, Segment 3 – The following private land is in Segment 3 of the Secesh River.

Zena Creek Ranch (T20N R6E Section 29)(50 acres) - This property lies within Valley County, which provides comprehensive planning, wetlands, and floodplain protection on private lands. Development of these lands would not be contrary to Recreational river status; therefore, acquiring rights on this property is not necessary. The ranch holds a FERC exemption for a special use permit hydropower project on Zena Creek.

South Fork Salmon River, Segment 1 – The following private lands are in Segment 1 of the South Fork Salmon River.

Reed Ranch (T18N R6E)(190 acres) - This private property has critical Threatened fish habitat and wetlands that are not suited for development. Although upland areas would not be in the river viewshed, development on river bluffs or flats adjacent to the SFSR would likely have impacts on the scenic character of the corridor. Development in the riparian zones along Phoebe and Camp Creeks could adversely affect water quality. This property is proposed for exchange with Brundage Mountain Company for lands within the ski area. In the event the exchange is not approved, the river corridor management plan should include the option to either (1) acquire a fee title on a willing seller basis, (2) acquire a conservation easement, (3) acquire a title or easement through exchange. Because development of uplands would not be contrary to a Recreational classification, conservation easement acquisitions should be limited to river bluffs, riparian areas, and flats adjacent to SFSR.

Willey (a.k.a. Davis Ranch)(T20N R7E) (240 acres) - This private property includes some upland areas not in the river viewshed, but development on river bluffs or flats overlooking the SFSR would likely affect the scenic character of the corridor. Development of road access to this property would create substantial sedimentation and visual impacts to several miles of the corridor. Because the major impacts of development would result from access construction, the

river corridor management plan should emphasize acquisition of a fee title through purchase or exchange. Conservation easement acquisition should be considered only as a last resort and limited to protecting river bluffs and riparian areas adjacent to the SFSR.

Fritzer Ranch (T20N R7E)(44 acres) - This private parcel lies on flats adjacent to the river and Fritzer Creek. Any development would likely affect the scenic character of the corridor. Development of road access to this property would create substantial sedimentation and visual impacts to several miles of the corridor and would require construction of a bridge or reopening a ford across the SFSR. Because the major impacts of development would result from road access construction, the river corridor management plan should emphasize acquisition of a fee title through purchase or exchange. A conservation easement acquisition should be considered only as a last resort.

Lawman #1, #2, #3, Higby, and Withers Ranches (T20N R7E) (786 acres) – These Idaho Department of Fish and Game properties encompass critical Threatened fish habitat and wetlands not suited for development. The location is T21N, R7E, Section 15. Although some upland areas would not be in the river viewshed, development on river bluffs or flats adjacent to the SFSR would likely affect the scenic character of the corridor. Development of road access to these properties would create substantial sedimentation and visual impacts to several miles of the corridor. The Payette National Forest is presently attempting to acquire these properties through the Browns Meadow exchange with the Clearwater National Forest. If the exchange is not approved, the river corridor management plan should include the option to (1) acquire a fee title on a willing seller basis through purchase or exchange, or if the State disposes of the properties to private interests, (2) to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure the State reserves conservation easements sufficient to protect potentially affected Threatened species.

Elk Lake Ranch (77 acres) - This moderately developed private parcel lies on the flats adjacent to the river. Any additional development could affect scenic or other resource values. Acquisition of a fee title or conservation easement should remain an option.

Elk Creek Ranch, Hettinger Ranch West, Trail's End Subdivision (334 acres) - These developed private lands are served by existing county or National Forest System roads. Most impacts to the river corridor have already occurred, although there remain some undeveloped flats and riparian areas adjacent to the SFSR. The river corridor management plan should include the option to acquire a fee title to undeveloped portions of the property on a willing seller basis through purchase or exchange, or conservation easements. Because development of uplands would not be contrary to a Recreational classification, conservation easement acquisitions should be limited to protecting river bluffs and flats adjacent to the SFSR, and riparian areas along major tributaries. The Hettinger Ranch holds a FERC license for a permitted hydropower project on Smith Creek.

Hettinger Ranch East (134 acres) - This undeveloped private parcel can only be accessed for development if a bridge is constructed across the SFSR. Any development would likely affect the scenic character of the corridor. Because the major impacts of development would result from access construction, the river corridor management plan should emphasize acquisition of a fee title through purchase or exchange on a willing seller basis. Conservation easement

acquisition should remain an option, but a decision to allow bridge construction should be made only as a last resort.

South Fork Salmon River, Segment 2 – The following private lands are in Segment 1 of the South Fork Salmon River.

Badley Ranches, HES 341, and HES 49 (181 acres) - These lightly developed properties include some upland areas that not in the river viewshed, however, development on river bluffs or flats overlooking the SFSR would negatively affect the wild character of the corridor. Conservation easement acquisition should remain an option and a high priority.

Copenhaver Ranch Subdivision (95 acres) - This highly developed parcel is served by cable car access over the SFSR and relies on continued maintenance of approximately 1 mile of the Lower South Fork Trail to a 4-wheel drive road standard. Substantial negative impacts to the river corridor have already occurred as lot sales and residential development on the property have taken place on sites immediately adjacent to the river. Periodic demands for road access, bridges, and water systems provide the threat of increased impacts in the future. To limit growth, conservation easement acquisition should be a high priority.

Monumental Creek, Segment 1 - Segment 1 contains no private land along the river corridor.

Monumental Creek, Segment 2 – The following private land is in Segment 2 of Monumental Creek.

Von Staden, MS 3572 (39 acres) - This private ranch presently has few impacts to the Wild river classification. Because of the ranch's potential to negatively affect the river and surrounding wilderness, however, the Wild river corridor management plan should include an option to acquire a fee title through purchase or exchange on a willing seller basis, as well as an option to acquire a conservation easement.

Big Creek, Segment 1 – The following private land is in Segment 1 of Big Creek.

Edwardsburg Community (485 acres) – This is a subdivided and developed area with numerous small cabin sites, many of which are accessed by a bridge or ford across Big Creek. There is one FERC exempted hydropower plant permitted on Government Creek and one FERC licensed hydropower plant on an unnamed creek on NFS land just north of Edwardsburg. The Forest Service maintains its Big Creek Work Center and campground just north of Edwardsburg and there is a State of Idaho maintained airport under permit adjacent to the Work Center. There is also at least one outfitter lodge operating in the private land and another under permit on NFS land. No acquisition or easement of any kind is being proposed in this area.

Big Creek, Segment 2 – The following private land is in Segment 2 of Big Creek.

State Section 16 T20N R9E (640 acres), and State 36 T21N R12 E (640 acres) - These properties were recently proposed for land exchange with the Forest Service but were dropped from the

exchange when the State of Idaho needed to eliminate acreage to equalize exchange values. These sections will be considered in future exchange proposals with the State.

Taylor Ranch (65 acres) - This property is a research station owned by the University of Idaho. It is substantially developed with administrative and residential facilities, a small hydropower system, and a landing strip. No acquisition of any kind is proposed on this land.

French Creek - There is no private land located along Segments 1, 2, or 3 of French Creek. After leaving the Payette National Forest, French Creek Trail 116 passes through State of Idaho land and BLM and private land. Private land blocks public access to the Salmon River at the end of the French Creek Trail 116.

Direct and Indirect Effects for Issue 2

Effects discussed below are common to private landowners with inholdings in all five rivers in this Study Report.

Under **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, none of the rivers in the Study Report would be recommended for designation. Therefore, there would be no effects to the private landowners with inholdings along or directly adjacent to the river corridors. The Forest Service does have the option of purchasing conservation easements and/or fee titles from these landowners to protect river values, but none are currently proposed. Selection of this alternative eliminates the concern that designation would lead to potential restrictions on future development of private land. It would also eliminate concerns that designation could lead to trespass, extra garbage and sanitation, and increased use of roads. County planning and zoning would continue to regulate development on private land in river corridors. Without river designation recommendation, there would be fewer protective measures and regulations to protect the free-flowing nature of the rivers, the scenic quality of the areas, and the values many homeowners sought in this area.

For **Alternatives 2 and 3**, private landowners had concerns regarding trash, increased recreationists, trespass of their lands, sanitation disposal problems, camping on private lands and public use of private roads as a result of river designation recommendation. Designating a river does not mean it is accessible at any location along that river segment. Certain river access points would be identified on the ground through National Forest System lands. Private lands would continue to be managed by their owners. There is no evidence that designation has led to trespass problems on existing Wild and Scenic Rivers. Adjacent lands are predominantly National Forest with sufficient public access. Trespassing should not increase because the Forest Service would provide maps and signs to direct recreational use to publicly owned access sites only and would monitor recreational use. Private landowners are entitled to identify their property boundary with No Trespassing signs.

For **Alternatives 2 and 3**, property values and the local business climate would remain the same or improve slightly due to the distinction of being located on a specially recognized river (Northwest Rivers Council – Undated brochure). Retention of natural and rural settings along designated rivers makes them particularly attractive to residential and agricultural buyers. The property tax rate is a local issue outside the authority of administrating federal agencies.

The limited and rarely used condemnation power (to clear title or acquire scenic or other easements to give the public access to the designated river segments) granted by Section 6(a) of the WSR Act has often triggered opposition to designation from local landowners. A recent survey of Forest Service land acquisition on 16 Wild and Scenic Rivers in the West Coast states revealed that, of 200,000 acres of private land within the river corridors, no land had ever been condemned, and only 751 acres in conservation easements had been purchased. Section 6(b) of the Act specifically prohibits the use of condemnation for fee title purchases of private lands if 50 percent or more of the acreage within the boundaries on both sides of the designated river are owned by the public. Since all five rivers in this Study Report are over 50 percent in public land ownership, condemnation is not an option for purchase of private lands on any of the rivers. So condemnation would not be a potential effect under Alternatives 2 or 3 to private landowners within any of the five study rivers. In addition, Section 6 (a)(1) of the Act prohibits acquiring more than 100 acres per river mile within the corridor, which is approximately 50 acres on either side of the river.

The benefit of designation could be increased funding to manage the river corridor, and to manage the problems identified above. For Alternatives 2 and 3, existing land uses and activities are compatible with river management for designation recommendation. The classification recommendations in Alternative 2 take into account those developments and uses currently in place. There are no proposals to curtail or modify current land uses in the study river corridors. Future proposals for development on public lands in the river corridor could be affected by designation under Alternatives 2 and 3, if determined to be incompatible with maintaining river values. No specific proposals for new private development along any of the five rivers were identified during the scoping process.

Under **Alternative 2**, numerous easements and purchases are recommended. Easements could be purchased with the landowner's cooperation. Purchasing a partial right (easement) or the property in fee title is usually the last resort and would only be pursued where deemed necessary. If an easement were purchased, the owner would sell certain development rights and receive a payment, but still retain title to the land. The landowner can rent, sell, or donate their land, or leave it to heirs, and/or restrict public access to their land. Landowners do not lose land under an easement purchase. Influence over private land uses could be obtained through cooperative agreements with landowners or through county or other local zoning ordinances. These options are available to the federal government with or without river designation. The purchase of conservation easements and/or acquisition of a fee title as proposed on certain private land inholdings under Alternative 2 could provide capital to the private landowners.

Under **Alternative 3**, no purchase of easements on private land inholdings is proposed. This could affect designated segments of river adjacent to those private inholdings because future development on those private lands would not be regulated by an easement. This development could lower the values of the river corridor and its associated ORVs.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act does not grant the federal government any authority to control what occurs on private land. Under the Act, designation neither gives nor implies government control of private lands within the river corridor. Although Congress could include private lands (inholdings) within the boundaries of the designated river area, management restrictions would

apply only to National Forest System lands. Therefore there would be a minimal effect to private landowners use of their land under Alternative 2 and 3.

Direct and Indirect Effects Specific to Each River for Issue 2

Secesh River - Under Alternatives 2 and 3 there are segments recommended for Recreational and Wild classification. The Secesh Meadows private residential area lies within Segment 1, and the Zena Creek Ranch lies within Segment 3—both segments are recommended as Recreational for both Alternatives. A Recreational classification allows for small communities and residential development. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides no authority to the federal government to control what occurs on private land. The Forest Service would encourage cooperation between landowners, the state, and local governments to maintain existing river values. Idaho County (Secesh Meadows area) does not have planning or zoning ordinances for the Secesh area. Alternative 2 proposes some easement purchases, land exchanges, and a fee title acquisition for Segment 1. Effects of these easement purchases on landowners were discussed above for all five rivers in Direct and Indirect Effects for Issue 2. The Wild classification proposed for Segment 2, Alternative 2 does not affect private landowners because there is no private land within this river segment.

South Fork Salmon River- Many conservation easements and purchases are proposed for Segment 1 under Alternative 2. Effects to private landowners are described above in Direct and Indirect Effects for Issue 2. Segment 1 is recommended as Recreational for both Alternatives 2 and 3. This classification allows for small communities, cluster residential developments, new structures for habitation, and intensive recreation use. There would be no effects to the current private landowner uses under either alternative.

Segment 2 of the SFSR is recommended as Wild for Alternatives 2 and 3. The majority of the segment is located within the FCRONR Wilderness and already has existing regulations and prohibitions because of its wilderness status. The last mile prior to the confluence with the main Salmon River contains private inholdings in the river corridor. Within this mile, the last quarter mile is already inside the designated Wild and Scenic River, the Salmon River. Under Alternative 2, some private lands contained within Segments 1 and 2 of the SFSR are proposed for conservation easement purchases, land exchanges or fee title acquisitions. Although the recommended river classifications are the same for Alternative 3, the difference between the alternatives is that there are no easements or purchases proposed under Alternative 3. Therefore, any effects listed above to landowners regarding purchases of easements or acquisition of a fee title would not apply under Alternative 3.

Big Creek and Monumental Creek - Under Alternative 2, there are a few small private land sections within Segment 2 for both Big Creek and Monumental Creek. These segments are within the FCRONR Wilderness and are already managed under wilderness regulations. Under Alternative 2, an easement purchase is recommended for a private land segment contained within Segment 2 of Monumental Creek. No acquisitions of any kind are proposed for Big Creek.

Alternative 3 does not recommend any purchases of easements or acquisition of a fee title.

French Creek - There is no private land in any of the proposed French Creek segments, so there would be no effects to private landowners.

Cumulative Effects for Issue 2

Upon designation, conservation easements purchased from private landowners along certain private land segments would limit the potential future development opportunities on private land within the river corridors. As a result of exchanges and fee title purchases, the Forest Service would gain ownership to several hundred acres of private land and would incorporate management of these lands into existing plans. Purchase of these lands could potentially decrease future resource degradation by preventing uncontrolled development.

If easements are sought out along private land inholdings, and some fee title acquisitions are completed, as proposed in Alternative 2, there could be less private land without encumbrances of easements available within the five river corridors.

Issue 3: Potential Effects On Mineral Extraction Opportunities And Current Mineral Leases And Claims.

The Affected Environment for Issue 3

Secesh River - There are 33 unpatented placer mining claims along the Secesh River/Lake Creek corridor. Although the opportunities for mineral exploration or development activities appear to be high, the potential for development is currently low because of depressed metal prices and the cost of environmental mitigation necessary to protect resident and migratory fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act. There is no known potential for geothermal development or oil and gas leasing. There are two placer dredge operations along Segment 2. The Golden Rule, which has been reclaimed, is on National Forest System land. The other placer dredge operation is on private land and has not been reclaimed. Neither site is visible from the river.

At this time there is no authorized mineral development or proposed development occurring on NFS lands within this river corridor. There are no mineral leases and no permitted removal of common variety minerals in the river corridor. The potential for major undiscovered placer gold resources is moderate. Interest in suction dredging, gold panning, and other small-scale activities is likely to continue.

There is a lignite deposit in Secesh Meadows, but the potential for development is low: the potential for the development of other leasable minerals in the corridor is also low. Common variety minerals such as gravel, cobbles, and sand are relatively abundant in the river corridor and surrounding area. The probability for development of these common variety minerals is high, however these minerals are also available outside the corridor.

South Fork Salmon River - There are 16 placer mining claims and one lode claim along the SFSR corridor. Potential for significant mineral development is low because of depressed metal prices, and the cost of environmental mitigation necessary to protect resident and migratory fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act. There is very low potential for exploration or development of oil and gas resources. The potential for development of geothermal resources in the Vulcan Hot Springs area on the Boise National Forest is moderately high.

There is an approved Plan of Operation for a small underground mine, and two exploration proposals in the process of approval on the Payette portion of Segment 1. There are no mineral leases in the river corridor. There is no permitted removal of common variety minerals in the river corridor.

Placer gold resources are considered small and low-grade so development potential is low. The potential for development of lode deposits in the river corridor is also low. A large portion of Segment 2 (FCRONR Wilderness) is already withdrawn from mineral entry. In addition, exploration and development costs would be high in Segment 2 due to access limitations, which would require a significant increase in metals prices to be economically feasible. The leasable minerals (oil, gas, coal, etc.) potential of the corridor is low. Sources of common variety minerals are more readily available outside the river corridor, therefore the probability of significant development is low.

Monumental Creek - There are 21 lode and two placer mining claims, and two mill site claims along the Monumental Creek corridor. All of the lode and placer claims are outside the FCRONR Wilderness boundary. The two mill site claims are in lower Monumental Creek, just above the confluence with Big Creek. The Monumental Creek corridor just upstream of the Wilderness boundary lies within the Thunder Mountain Mining District, an area of high mineral potential. There has been considerable exploration and development in this area, beginning in the early 1900s. In places, evidence of historic mining activity is highly visible along this portion of the river corridor.

There is no current or proposed mineral development occurring within the corridor. There are no mineral leases in the river corridor (leaseable mineral potential is low) and no permitted removal of common variety minerals. The probability for development of locatable mineral resources is low because most of the area is withdrawn from mineral entry due to wilderness designation. Some activity related to the Thunder Mountain Mining District is possible in the Mule Creek area.

Big Creek - There is one lode, four placer mining claims, and one mill site claim along the Big Creek corridor. All of the lode and placer claims are outside of wilderness. The mill site claim is in lower Big Creek, within the FCRONR Wilderness. There is no current authorized development, no proposed activity, and no mineral leases in the river corridor. Leaseable mineral potential is low, and potential for development of common variety minerals is moderate, but there are adequate sources outside the river corridor. There is no permitted removal of common variety minerals in the river corridor. The locatable mineral potential is moderate, but the probability of development is low in most of the corridor. Segment 2 is withdrawn from mineral entry, and activity outside the FCRONR Wilderness has occurred outside the river corridor.

French Creek - There are no mining claims in Segments 1, 2, and 3 of the French Creek corridor, and the potential for mineral exploration or development is low. There is no known potential for geothermal, oil and gas resources, and no current development or proposed mineral activity in the river corridor. There are no mineral leases and there is no permitted removal of

common variety minerals in the river corridor. The potential for locatable mineral resources and leasable mineral resources is low. Common variety minerals are available, but the potential for development is low because the area is unroaded.

Direct and Indirect Effects for Issue 3

Effects Common To All Alternatives - Recommendation and designation of any of the five study rivers as Wild and Scenic would have minimal effects on valid existing rights. Existing valid claims or leases within the river corridor would remain in effect, and activities would be subject to regulations that minimize surface disturbing sedimentation and visual impairment to the river corridor. Recommendation and designation would primarily affect future mineral exploration and development. Designation of rivers classified as Wild outside of existing wilderness would preclude surface occupancy for energy leases.

Under a Recreational classification, the river corridor would remain open to mineral entry, but all efforts must be made to preserve the character of the area that allowed it to be classified as Recreational and to preserve the ORVs for which the river corridor was recommended and designated. Plans of Operation would have to consider these values and preserve the free-flowing character of the river. Existing laws and regulations already impose most of these terms and conditions (mitigation measures) on mineral projects, so there would be little change in the management and implementation of mineral projects.

Under **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, mineral proposals and practices would be managed under the revised Boise and Payette Forest Plan management area direction. This alternative eliminates the concern that designation would lead to restrictions on future mineral development, and satisfies certain public and agency interests that remain opposed to designation of any or all of the rivers under any classification.

Under **Alternative 2**, Segment 2 of the Secesh River, and Segments 1, 2, and 3 of French Creek are recommended under a Wild classification and would be withdrawn from mineral entry. This could affect mineral operations in the area by eliminating opportunities in these segments; however, the effects would likely be minimal as the potential for mineral development is low in both areas due to depressed mineral prices (especially in the Secesh river corridor), and lack of mineral potential (especially in the French Creek river corridor). The authority to withdraw land from mineral entry lies with the Department of the Interior. If a river is designated as Wild, a mineral report would be prepared by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that addresses past mineral activity and the mineral potential of the area. The Forest Service would make recommendations based on an environmental analysis and the mineral report. The Regional Mining Engineer or Geologist is responsible for approval of the mineral report. If approved, the BLM formally withdraws the subject area from entry under the Mining Law after a public notification process.

For Alternative 2, Segment 2 of the SFSR, Big Creek, and Monumental Creek, are recommended for designation under a Wild classification. Segment 2 of Big Creek and Monumental Creek, and all but 2 miles of the SFSR Segment 2, are within designated wilderness and have already been withdrawn from mineral entry. The 2-mile portion of Segment 2 in the SFSR outside of wilderness would be affected by the withdrawal of the area from future mineral entry.

Under Alternative 2, Segments 1 and 3 of the Secesh, and Segment 1 of the SFSR, Big Creek, and Monumental Creek are recommended under a Recreational classification, which allows for mineral activities to occur under protection of river ORV guidelines.

Alternative 3 recommends a Recreational classification for all segments of the Secesh, SFSR, and French Creek. This classification allows for mineral activities to occur under protection of river value guidelines. Guidelines for Recreational classification management include the protection of river values, but new mining claims and mineral leases are allowed outside of wilderness. This alternative keeps future mineral exploration options open, whereas Alternative 2 eliminates them with a recommended Wild classification.

Cumulative Effects for Issue 3

Restrictions could be placed on mineral exploration and development that could reduce the availability of mineral resources in areas recommended as Wild that occur outside of wilderness.

Under a Wild designation, mineral claimants and prospectors would lose opportunities for mineral exploration and development on river segments outside of wilderness.

Restrictions that protect ORVs on designated Recreational river segments over and above current laws and regulations, could make development of mineral opportunities for mineral operators within the river corridors financially unfeasible.

Issue 4: Potential Effects On Long-Term Protection Of Scenic Qualities

The Affected Environment for Issue 4

Recommendation and designation would provide scenic quality protection for the five study rivers. Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) provide a means to measure the effects of management activities. The five VQOs are Preservation, Retention, Partial Retention, Modification, and Maximum Modification. Each VQO describes a differing degree of acceptable alteration of the natural landscape, with Preservation being the most restrictive, and Maximum Modification, the least. Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the recommended classifications have assigned VQOs to protect the scenic environment. For example, a Wild classification has a Preservation VQO, a Scenic classification has a Retention VQO, and a Recreational classification has a Partial Retention VQO.

The VQO system is designed to measure and mitigate changes to the scenic environment from management activities. Wildfires are natural events, and as such are not covered by the VQO system and do not produce any changes in VQOs, regardless of the effects they may have on the scenic environment.

The revised Boise and Payette National Forest Plans also have established VQOs for all areas within their Forest boundaries. In cases where the Forest Plan VQOs are more restrictive than the Wild and Scenic VQOs, the more restrictive VQOs will be assigned. If any of the five rivers are found to be unsuitable and are therefore not recommended for designation, the Forest Plan management area direction will revert back to VQOs established for that management area.

Secesh River - Segment 1 has a VQO of Partial Retention, Segment 2 has a VQO of Preservation, and Segment 3 has a VQO of Partial Retention under Alternative 2. Under Alternative 3, all 3 segments would have a VQO of Partial Retention. In the revised Payette Forest Plan, VQOs are similar or in some cases more restrictive than the Wild and Scenic River VQOs. For example, Forest Plan VQOs for Segment 1 are Retention and Partial Retention; Segment 2 is Retention, Partial Retention, and Preservation; and Segment 3, Retention. These more restrictive VQOs would be followed; therefore there would be no effect to scenic quality VQOs with the designation of the Secesh River.

South Fork Salmon River - Under Alternatives 2 and 3, Segment 1 has a Wild and Scenic VQO of Partial Retention, and Segment 2, of Preservation. Boise and Payette Forest Plan VQOs for Segment 1 are Retention, Partial Retention, and Preservation; Segment 2 VQOs are Retention and Preservation. The more restrictive Boise and Payette Forest Plan VQOs would be applied; therefore there would be no effect to scenic quality VQOs with recommendation and designation of the SFSR.

Monumental Creek and Big Creek - For both creeks, Segment 1 has a Wild and Scenic VQO of Partial Retention, and Segment 2, of Preservation for Alternatives 2 and 3. Payette Forest Plan VQOs are Retention for Segment 1, and Preservation for Segment 2, for both creeks. The Forest Plan VQO is more restrictive for Segment 1 and the VQO for Segment 2 is the same as the Wild and Scenic VQO for both Alternatives 2 and 3, so there would be no effect to scenic quality VQOs with recommendation and designation of Monumental Creek or Big Creek.

French Creek - The Wild and Scenic VQOs for French Creek, Little French Creek, and Jackson Creek are Preservation under Alternative 2, and Partial Retention under Alternative 3. Payette Forest Plan VQOs are Partial Retention for Segment 1, Retention for Segment 2, and Partial Retention for Segment 3. The Wild and Scenic River Act VQOs are more restrictive under Alternative 2, and the same or less restrictive as the Forest Plan VQOs under Alternative 3. These more restrictive Wild and Scenic VQOs under Alternative 2 would eliminate the possibility of timber harvest, or any other activity that could alter the river corridor landscape. There would be no effect to VQOs under Alternative 3.

Direct and Indirect Effects for Issue 4

For a designated river with an ORV for scenic quality (SFSR, Monumental Creek, and French Creek), projects that could affect these river corridors would need to be designed to protect the area's scenic quality ORVs in addition to the VQOs. The outstanding scenic features could not be jeopardized. This would apply to planned fire ignitions, timber harvesting, mineral operations, facility construction, road construction, and any other land disturbing activity. It would most often result in mitigation measures of effects in Recreational and Scenic classifications, but may mean avoiding, not approving, or severely restricting some projects under a Wild classification.

Designation of river segments as Recreational would have only a limited effect on prescribed fire planned ignitions. The ignitions would need to be planned to retain the area's established VQO and outstanding scenic features. River segments classified as Wild would need to retain a VQO

of Preservation, which allows for some visual impact associated with prescribed fire. Other future management activities are prohibited except for maintenance of low impact facilities such as trails and signs.

Segment 2 of the SFSR and Monumental Creek, and Segments 1, 2, and 3 of French Creek are recommended for Wild classification. No timber harvest could occur, no new mineral claims could be filed (although existing valid claims are allowed to continue), and no roads or other provisions for overland motorized travel would be permitted within the river corridor that could impact scenic quality. Large campgrounds, if proposed in the future, would be located outside any Wild river corridors to protect the Preservation VQO. New structures within Wild segments of the river corridor would not be allowed.

Cumulative Effects for Issue 4

Recommendation of any of the five rivers as Wild would result in the scenic quality remaining much as it is today within the wilderness segments, with natural processes determining the landscape appearance. River segments with a Recreational classification would appear much as they do today, although some alteration to the scenic landscape could occur from project activities. Changes would be limited in size and intensity by the existing Visual Quality Objectives within the area, and the management objective of retaining a desirable recreational setting. Natural or prescribed fire within the river corridors could affect the scenic quality under any classification, but the effects would have the appearance of a natural disturbance.

REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

Relationship to Laws, Regulation, Policies and Other Direction

None of the three alternatives conflict with the revised Payette or Boise Forest Plans direction or Forest Service national policy.

None of the three alternatives would conflict with existing state or federal laws governing the leasing of minerals. The majority of Big Creek, Monumental Creek, and a portion of SFSR are within designated Wilderness, and are thus already withdrawn from mineral entry.

Portions of the SFSR, and the majority of Big Creek and Monumental Creek, are located within the FCRONR Wilderness. Wild and Scenic River designation is compatible with use authorized under the Wilderness Act.

Four out of the five study rivers contain small parcels of private land. Idaho County, which encompasses portions of the Secesh and SFSR, and all of French Creek, has no planning and zoning ordinances. Valley County, which includes parts of the Secesh and SFSR, and all of Monumental and Big Creeks, has comprehensive planning and wetlands and flood plain protection on private lands, which do not conflict with the proposed river designations.

Wild and Scenic River designation is compatible with ESA laws and regulations.

There are no county or local regulations or policies that would be in conflict with river designation regarding water uses.

Unavoidable Adverse Effects

Designation of any of the five rivers would prohibit future construction of dams. This would adversely affect future development of major hydropower facilities along any of the designated rivers.

Wild designation of river segments would virtually eliminate timber-harvesting opportunities. Commodity uses would be restricted on any river segments designated as Wild. Vegetation management along Wild segments would be limited to mostly prescribed fire, which would need to meet VQOs and maintain ORVs for those river segments.

Mineral opportunities would be adversely affected along Wild segments withdrawn from future entry. This would only apply to Wild segments outside of designated Wilderness, which are Segments 1, 2, and 3 of French Creek under Alternative 2, and Segment 2 of Secesh under Alternative 2. All other Wild segments are already within designated Wilderness and have been withdrawn from mineral entry.

Motorized use trail opportunities are limited under Wild designation, potentially adversely affecting future motorized trail and road opportunities along these segments. Future road building and construction opportunities would be eliminated under Wild designation.

No adverse impacts were identified that would affect other uses or resources including livestock grazing (which is allowed under all three river classifications), non-motorized recreation, scenic quality, air and water quality, soil, vegetation, or cultural resources. The primary reason for this determination is that the proposal being analyzed, Wild and Scenic River designation, is resource protection through management action, and in itself is oriented towards protecting resources from most adverse effects.

Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and the Maintenance of Long-Term Productivity

Short-term uses of the environment are those that generally occur on a yearly basis. Long-term productivity usually deals with time spans of 50 years or longer.

Implementation of Alternatives 2 and 3 would mean a long-term commitment to free-flowing river values, and would preclude activities that would diminish those values. The long-term productivity of anadromous fisheries and river-related recreation resources would be enhanced with designation and river free-flow protection under Alternatives 2 and 3.

Short-term and long-term commodity uses would be affected under Alternative 2 Wild segments to the greatest degree. But this is minimal because the majority of Wild segments are either within Wilderness or, as for French Creek and Segment 2 of the Secesh, not within the suitable timber base. Mining restrictions along the French Creek corridor and Secesh Segment 2 would affect long-term productivity of mineral resources because Segments 1, 2, and 3 of French

Creek, and Segment 2 of Secesh would be withdrawn from mineral entry under Alternative 2. These long-term effects would be minimal as the mineral potential of these two segments is low.

Long-term effects of Alternative 1 implementation could be the eventual construction of dams and reservoirs, thus the potential loss of ORVs along the river corridors.

Irreversible Or Irretrievable Commitments Of Resources

Irreversible commitment of resources refers to the loss of future resource options. This applies primarily to the effects of non-renewable resource uses such as minerals, cultural resources, or soil productivity, which are renewable only over long periods of time.

Irretrievable commitment of resources refers to the loss of opportunity for production or use of natural resources. The opportunity loss is irretrievable, but the action is not irreversible.

For all alternatives, the decision to recommend or not recommend the five rivers as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System cannot be considered an irreversible commitment of resources, because Congress could overturn this decision at any time. However, there may be some irretrievable commitments of resources associated with recommendation that would last until Congress decides to officially designate the rivers or not. These commitments are summarized below.

Under Alternative 1, the option for future water resource development would remain open. If a dam and reservoir were constructed, the river would lose the ORVs that made it an eligible Wild and Scenic River, and would therefore lose any future possibility of being designated a Wild and Scenic River. Whitewater recreation opportunities would no longer be available if damming occurred. In designated wilderness, dams can be authorized by the President. The anadromous fisheries would be severely jeopardized and most likely lost if these rivers were dammed.

Alternative 2 would indefinitely prohibit some commitment of resources (timber and minerals) in designated Wild River corridors outside Wilderness. These occur on Segments 1, 2, and 3 of French Creek and Segment 2 of Secesh. These segments are not within the suitable timber base, so effects would be limited to future mining opportunities.

Alternative 3 recommends more segments under the less restrictive Recreational classification, and therefore, has fewer effects to future commitments of timber, mineral and developmental commodities.

Under both Alternatives 2 and 3 the potential to impede the free-flowing characteristics would be lost indefinitely. Future development of large hydropower generating projects would be forgone indefinitely.

Wild and Scenic River recommendation would not have any effect on wetlands, floodplains, prime farmland, or rangeland.

CHAPTER VI PERSONS CONTACTED

PERSONS CONTACTED IN PREPARATION OF THE STUDY

This chapter lists the people who responded to the initial Wild and Scenic Rivers scoping proposal. A listing of additional persons that commented on the document can be found in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, Public Involvement, Appendix A. The comments reflected a wide range of opinions from those in favor of Wild and Scenic River recommendation and designation, to those in opposition.

Al Van Vooren, Regional Supervisor Idaho Department of Fish & Game
 Carl H. Nellis, Magic Valley Regional Supervisor Idaho Department of Fish & Game
 Judith M. Brawer, American Wildlands
 Natalie Shapiro, Northern Rockies Preservation Project
 Peter Johnson, Big Payette Lake Water Quality Council
 Jessica White, Idaho Rivers United
 Larry & Vicky Kuenzli, Daddy Dell Mining
 Randy Hess, White Otter Outdoor Adventures
 Carolyn Wren, Nez Perce Tribe Water Resources Division
 Dennis Clark, Idaho Department of Transportation
 George Bennett, Idaho Cattle Association
 Jim Smith, Secesh Meadows Property Owners Association
 Monica G. Cockerille, Boise Cascade Corp. Resource Action Group, Valley County

John Swanson	Ronald Mackelprang
Perry Silver	Donald Morrow
Edward Kershner	Bill Garrett
Richard Runstrom	Shirley Gerback
Jack Williams	James T. Chester
Roger Crist	James C. Lancaster
Roy Johnson	Bill Graham
Paul Poorman	Greg Johnson
Alan Reynolds	Dianne Heyrend
Ed Liddiard	Gladys Johnson
Gerald Voss	Betty Johnson
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CHAPTER VII

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The following people prepared this report.

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The following Forest Service personnel also contributed to this Suitability Report:

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Beth Ludvigsen
Kathy Nash
Clem Pope
Erin Rohlman
Curtis Spalding
Randy Swick
Lyn Wolfe

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River, Hoback River, Green River, Greys River and Salt River, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Wyoming

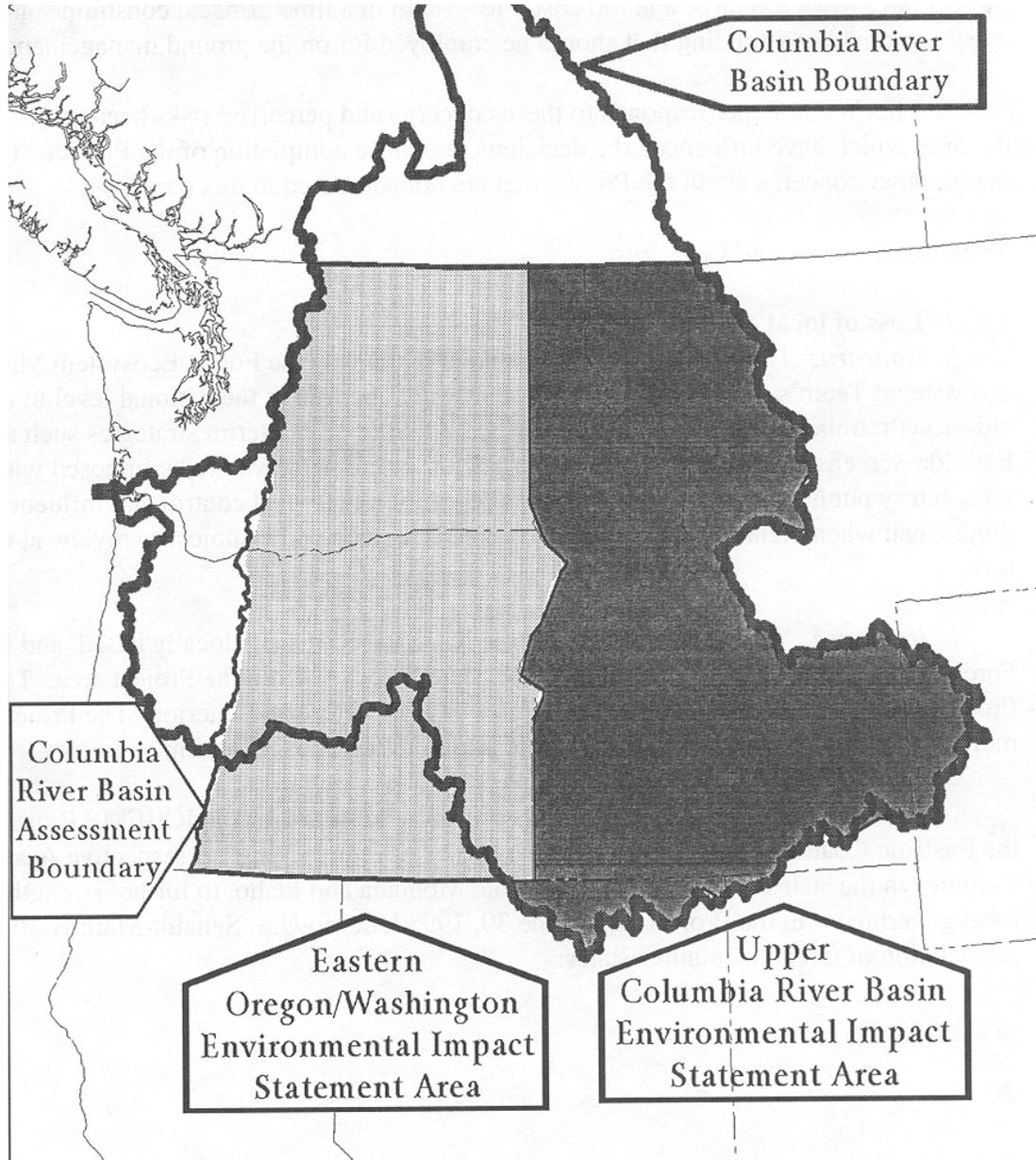
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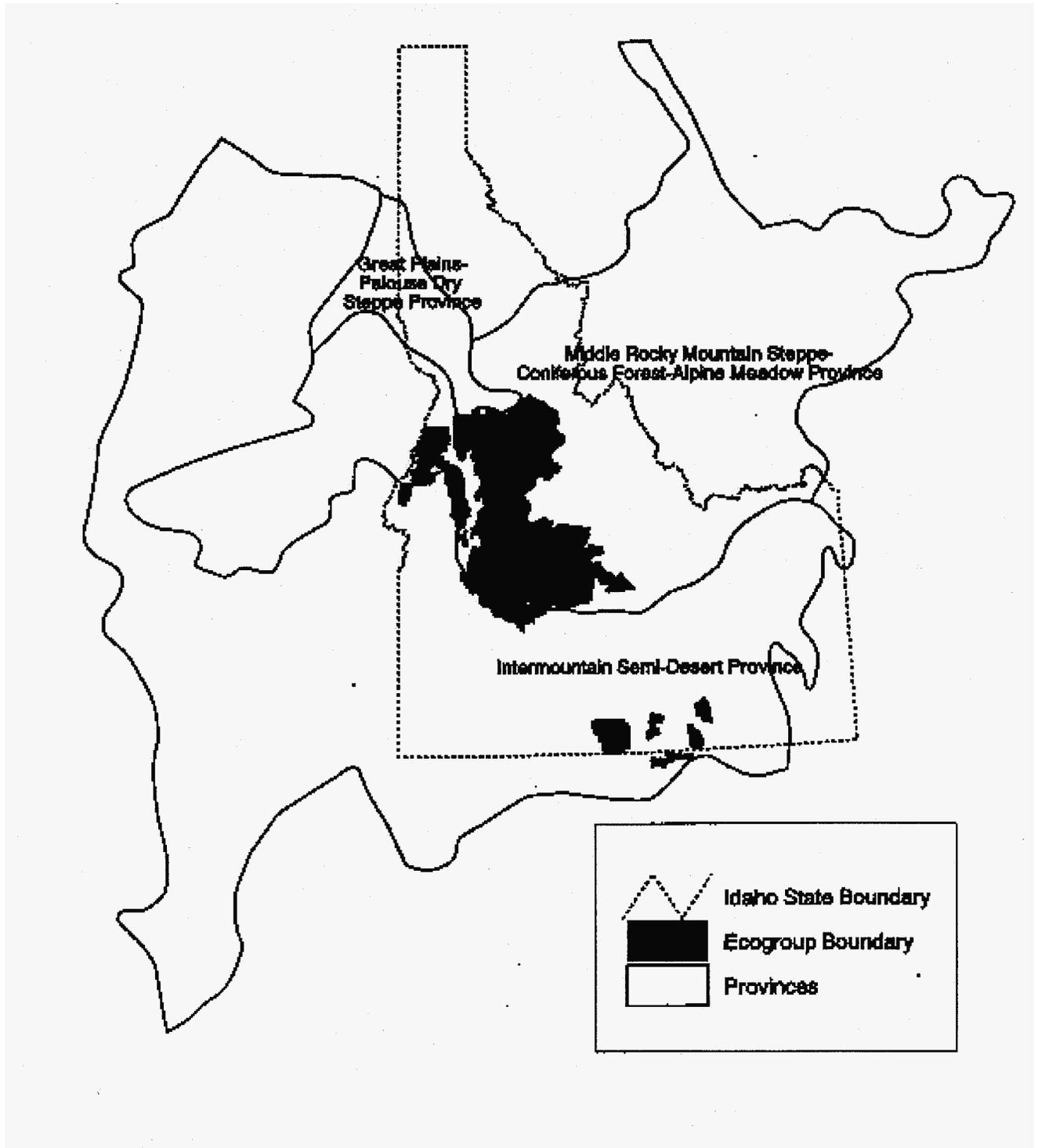
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REGION OF COMPARISON MAPS

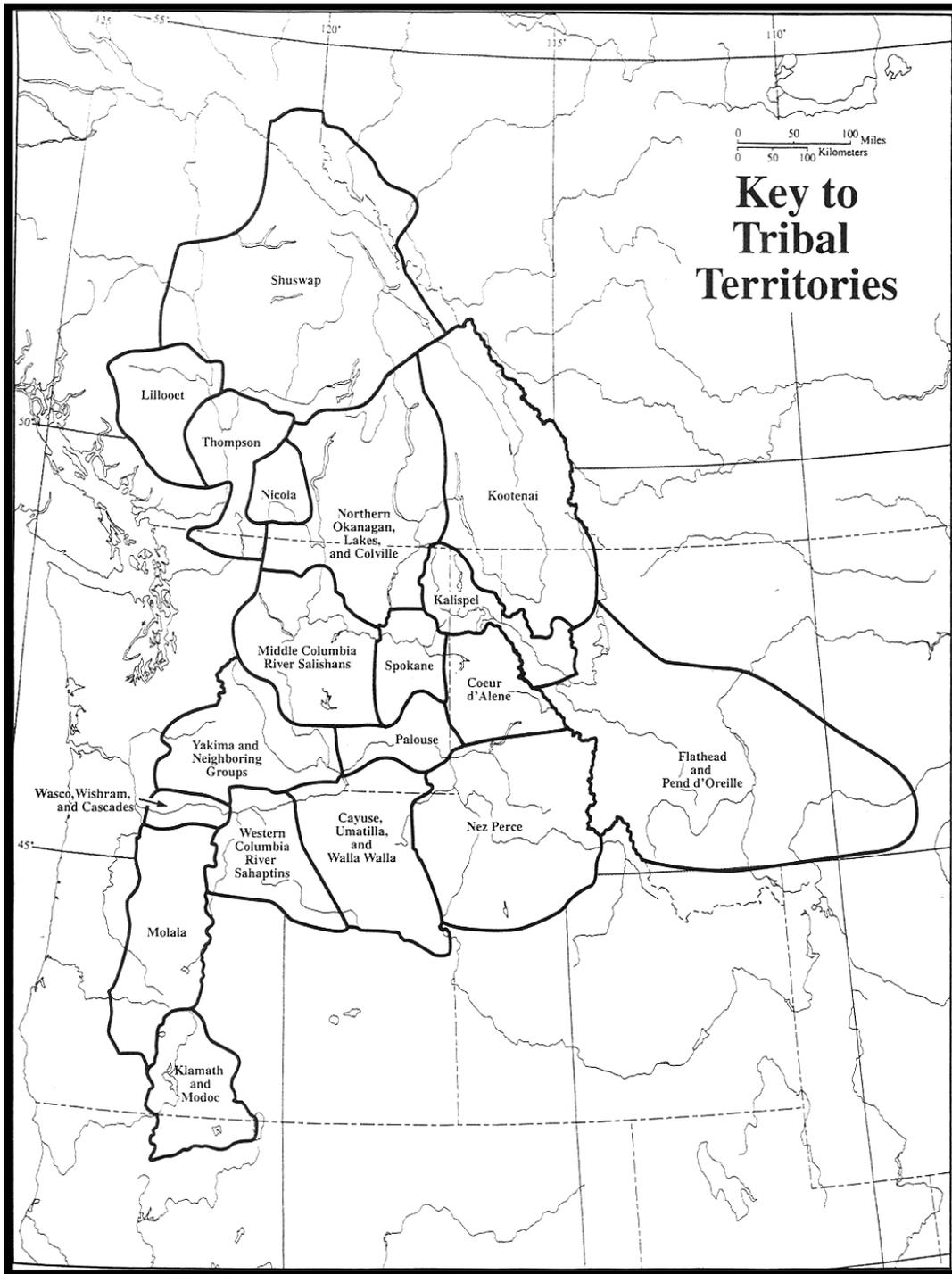
Map 1. Region of Comparison for Outstandingly Remarkable Values for Scenic Quality, Recreation/Interpretive, Wildlife, and Fisheries



Map 2. Region of Comparison for Outstandingly Remarkable Values for Geologic/Hydrologic and Botanical/Ecological Resources

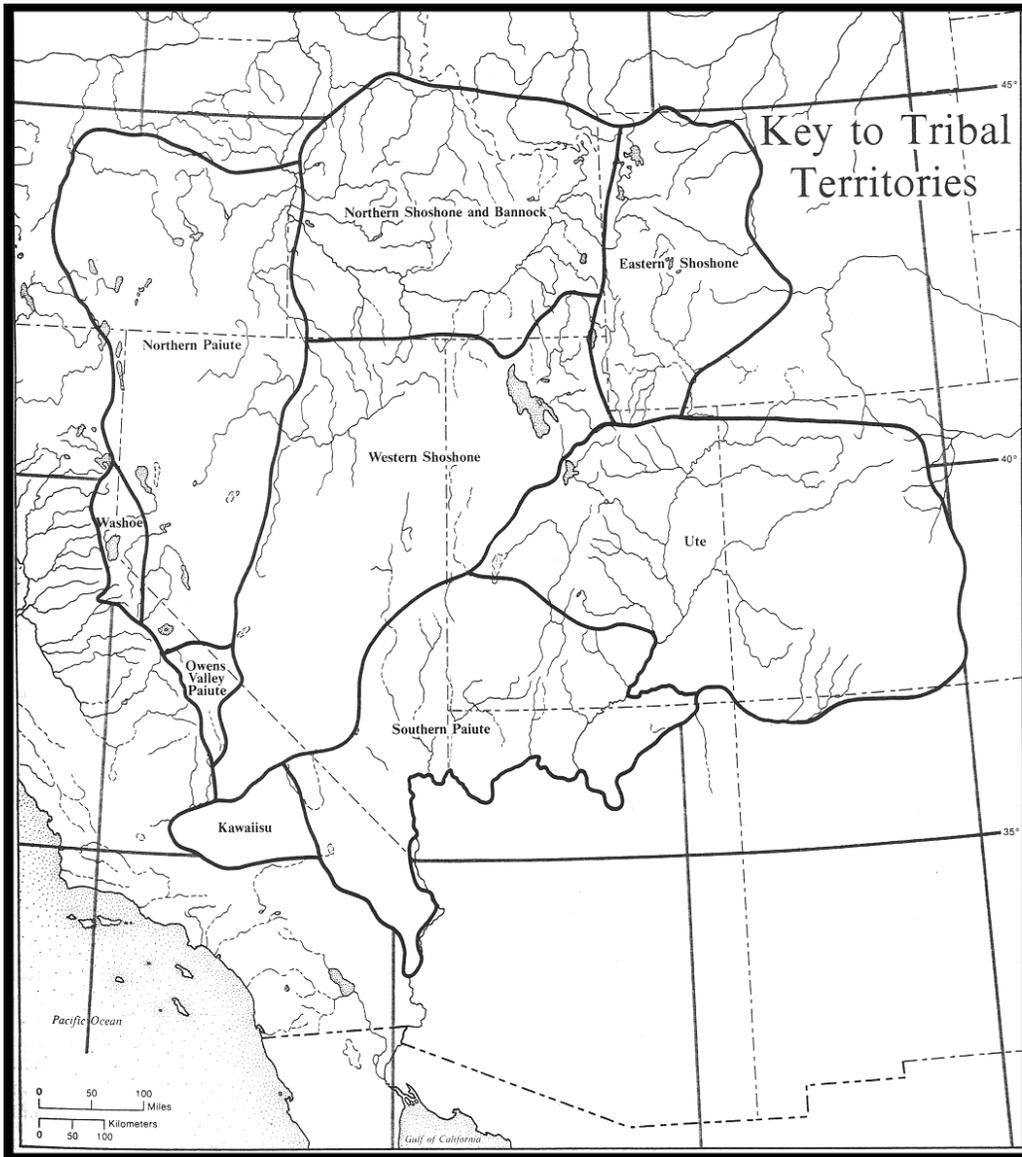


Map 3a. Region of Comparison Map for Prehistoric Values, Columbia Basin Plateau



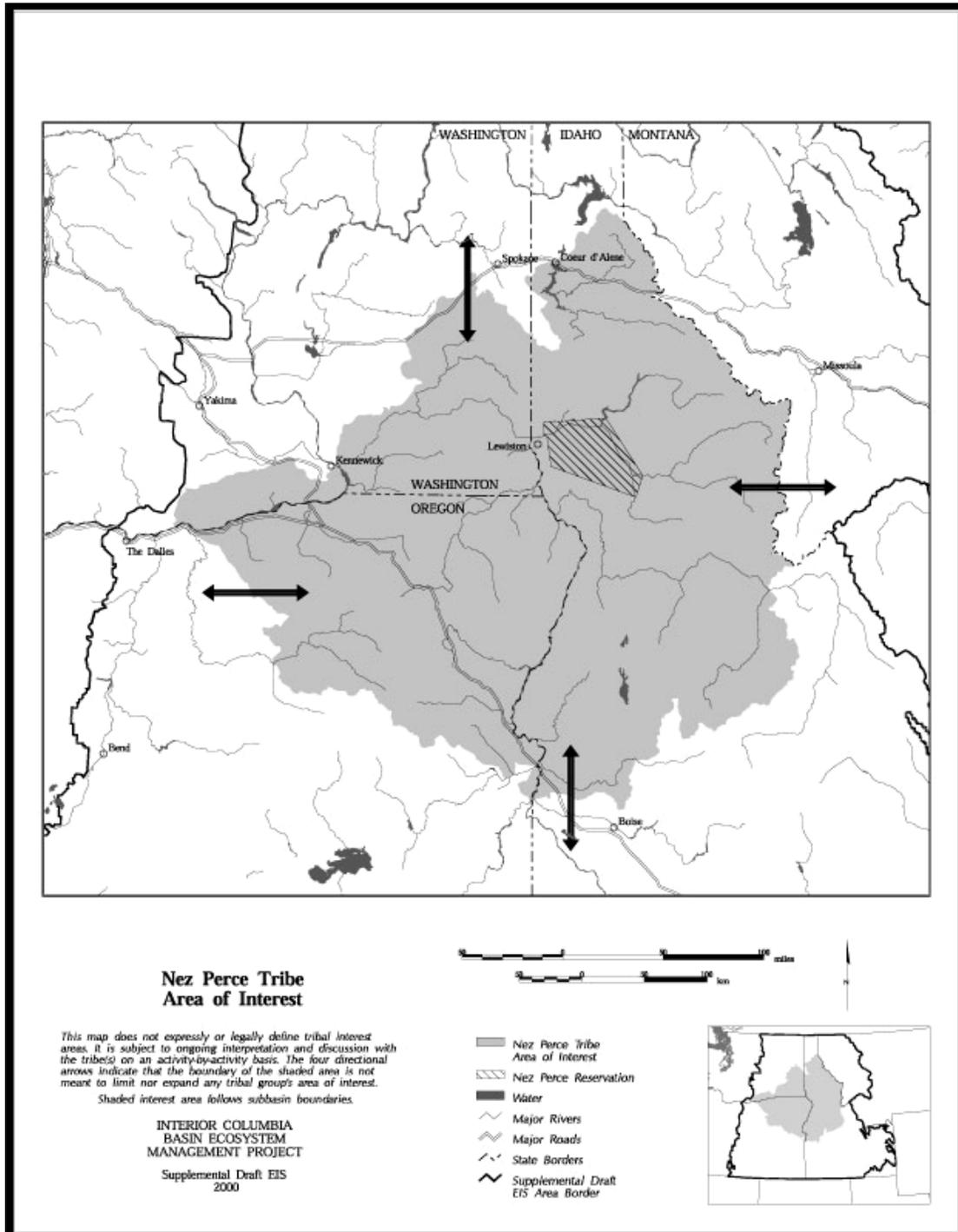
Source: Walker, Deward E. Jr., ed. *Columbia Plateau*. Vol. 12 of the *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. Willam C. Sturtevant. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.

Map 3b. Region of Comparison for Prehistoric Values, Great Basin



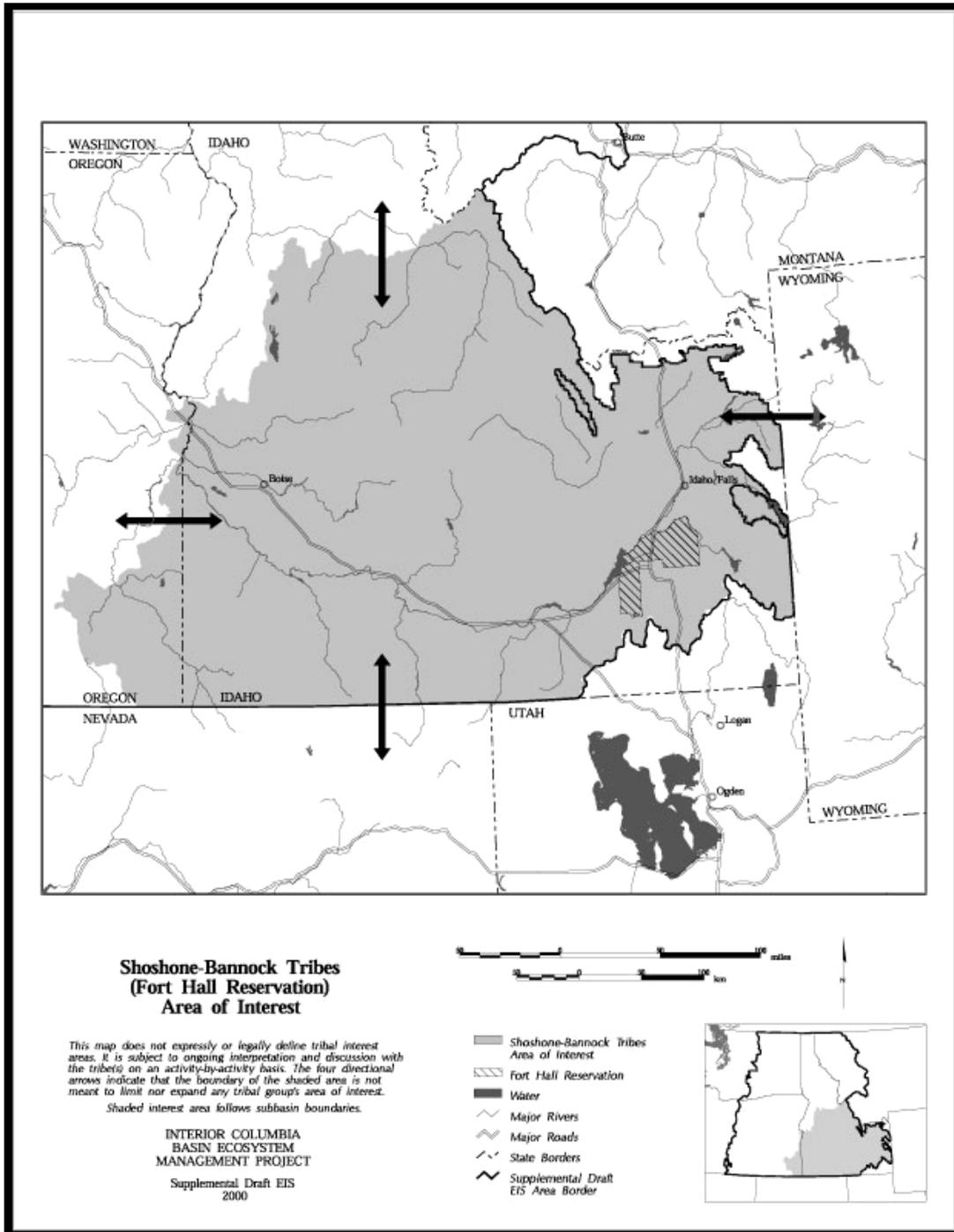
Source: D’Azevedo, Warren L., ed. *Great Basin*. Vol. 11 of the *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. Willam C. Sturtevant. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986.

Map 4a. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values, Nez Perce Tribe



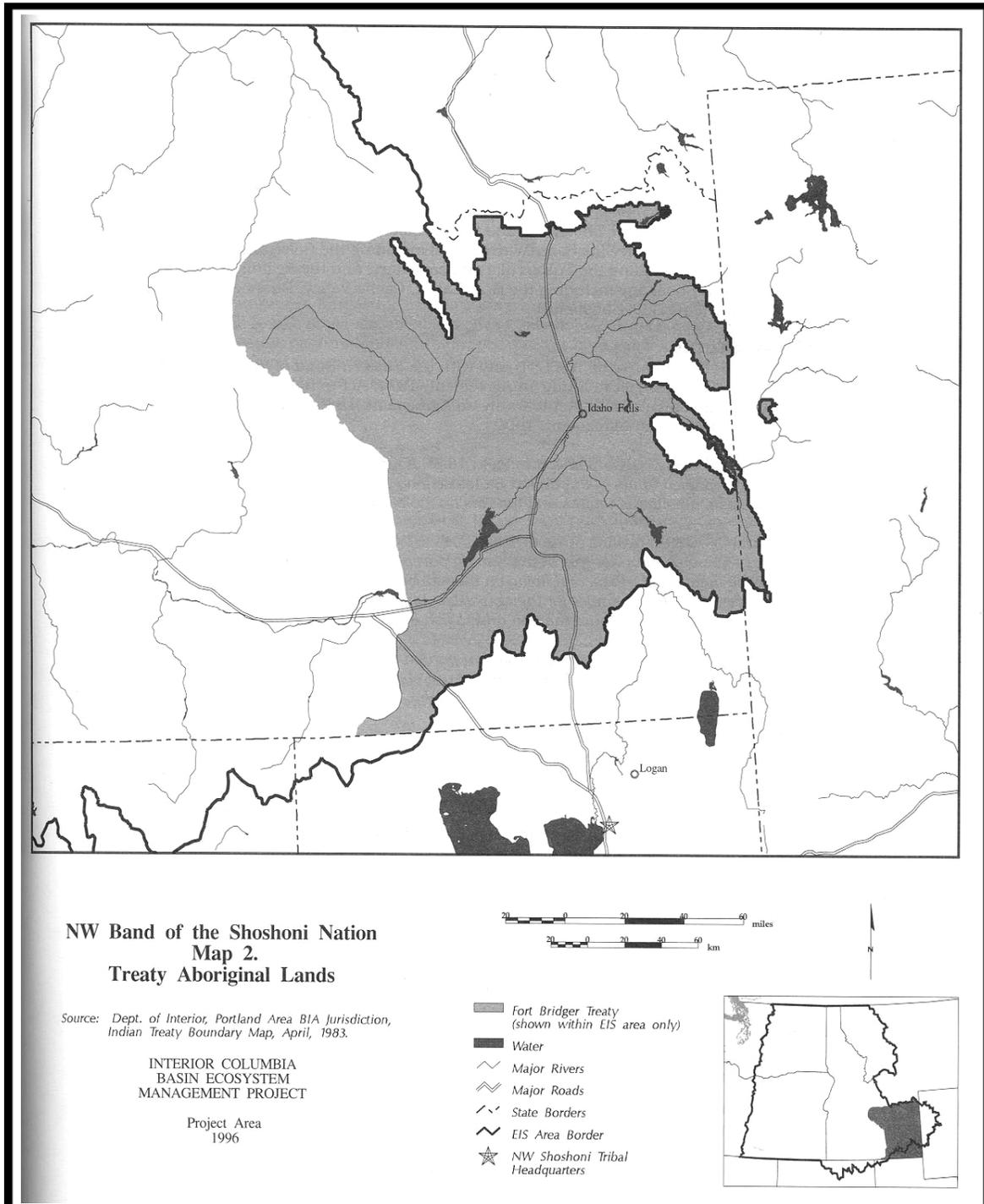
Source: USDA Forest Service. *Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol. 2, Appendices. May, 1997.

Map 4b. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes



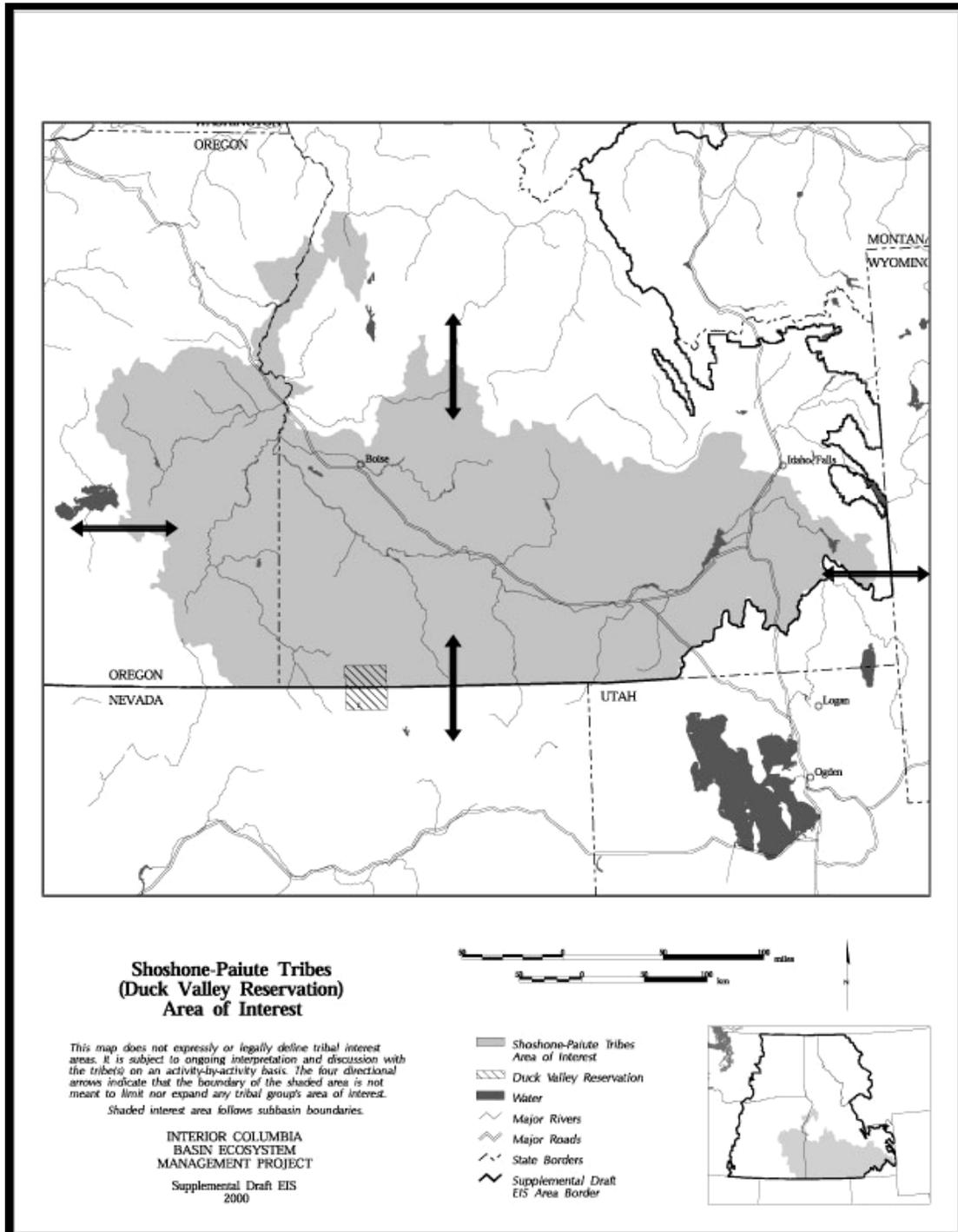
Source: USDA Forest Service. *Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol. 2, Appendices. May, 1997.

**Map 4c. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values,
Northwest Band of Shoshone Nation**



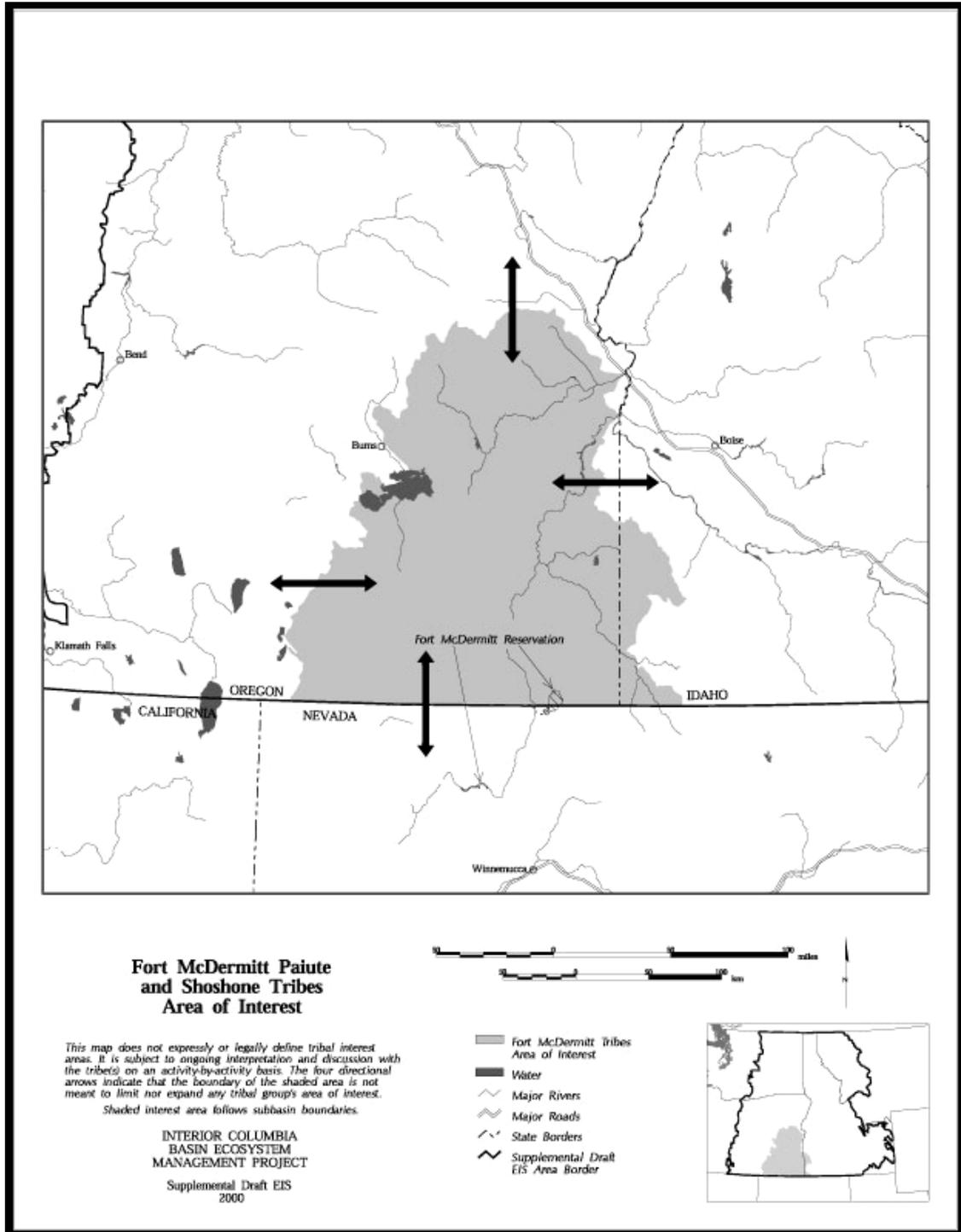
Source: USDA Forest Service. *Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol. 2, Appendices. May, 1997.

Map 4d. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes



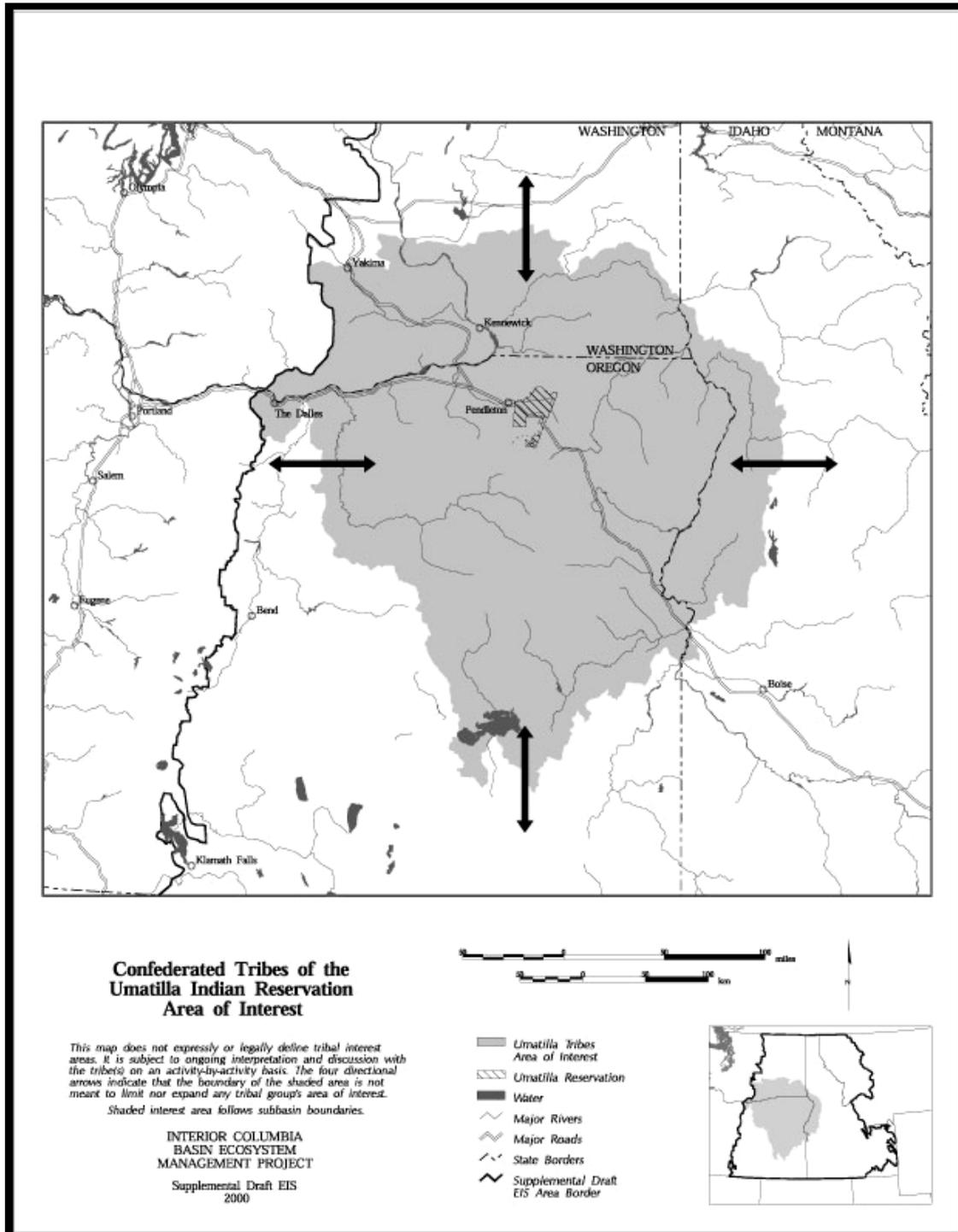
Source: USDA Forest Service. *Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol. 2, Appendices. May, 1997.

**Map 4e. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values,
Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribes**



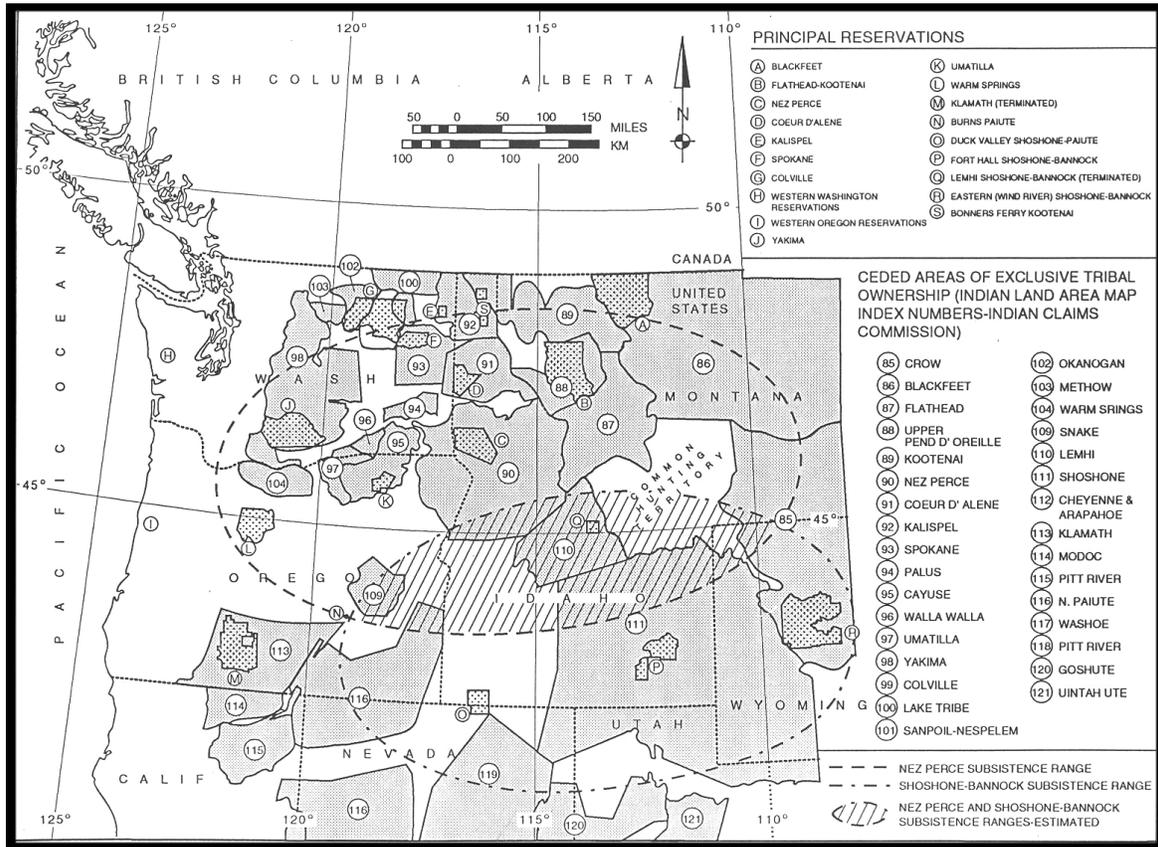
Source: USDA Forest Service. *Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol. 2, Appendices. May, 1997.

Map 4f. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla



Source: USDA Forest Service. *Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol. 2, Appendices. May, 1997.

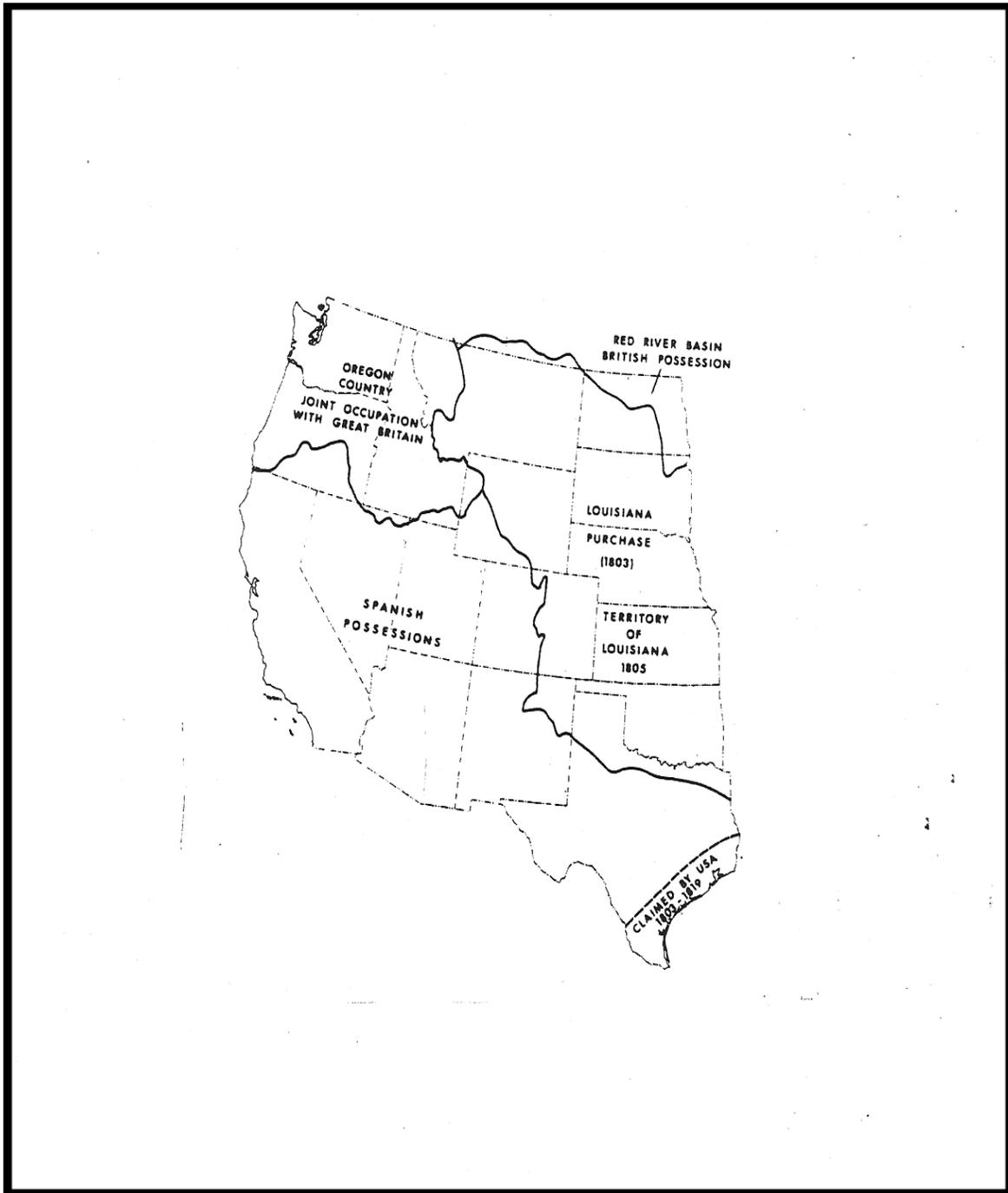
Map 4f. Region of Comparison for Traditional Cultural Values, Regional Perspective



Source: Deward Walker. Handout supplied to the BLM and Forest Service by Walker during joint meeting in Twin Falls, early 1990s.

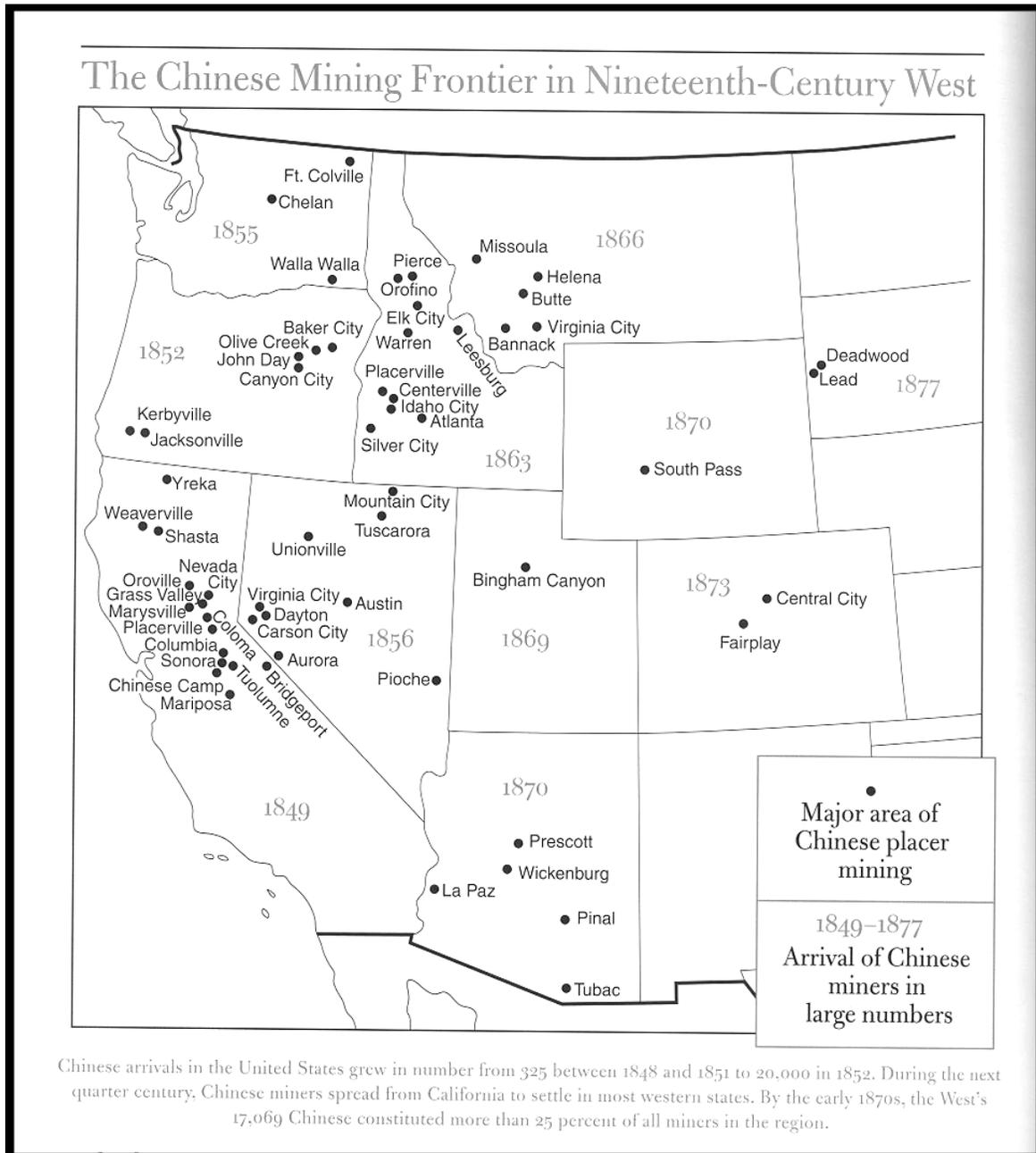
Note: This map is included because the Goshute Tribe (#120 on map) may have traditional cultural values on portions of the Sawtooth NF.

Map 5a. Region of Comparison for Historical Values and Euro-American, Basque, and Hispanic Traditional Cultural Values



Source: White, Richard. *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

Map 5a. Region of Comparison for Historical Values Related to Chinese Mining



Source: Zhu, Liping. “No Need to Rush: The Chinese, Placer Mining, and the Western Environment.” *Montana Magazine* 49 (Autumn 1999), 42-57.